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IF YOU WERE HITLER?

THIS question is not the beginning of a parlour game. Hitler plans ahead, and unless we anticipate his plans we may be caught again. He looks back on twelve months of brilliant successes, achieved according to plan, followed by a period in which his plans went all wrong. He mopped up Europe in the spring and early summer because he had made precisely the right preparations during the winter for his spring offensive. Things only went wrong for him when the British Army was not captured at Dunkirk and his invasion was prevented by the R.A.F. Now, after indiscriminate bombing which has not destroyed the morale or the communications or organisation of London, he is directing his air attacks on centres of production and has greatly intensified his attacks on our shipping. Meanwhile, he has proclaimed a new order for Europe under German domination, and summoned as his vassals the rulers of one small country after another. His Balkan plans are still obscure; Russian aid in supplies and political co-operation is still an ambiguous quantity, and he watches the discomfiture of his junior partner Mussolini probably with mixed emotions.

Hitler also has troubles at which we can guess, but which we cannot measure. There is some sabotage in his factories; grumbling resentment in Norway, Holland, Belgium and, above all, in France; the Spanish problem is not altogether easy for him; British bombers are hampering his production and forcing the transference of factories to Eastern Europe. Above all, his plans must be based on the fear of the increasing American help to Britain.

What, then, would you do if you were Hitler? In the coming three months you would put forward propaganda about the New European Order and rely on Britain refusing to state war aims of any sort. You would continue to bomb Britain and you would intensify your raiding, bombing and submarine attacks on British shipping. Above all, you would hope that Britain would behave again during this winter as France and Britain behaved during last winter. You would save your bombers and prepare for a greatly intensified blockade in the spring. Your real plans would not appear until, after a winter of intensified effort, you were ready for an attack on Britain, as crushing as that which destroyed France.

And what should Britain's reply be? First, clearly if possible to knock Mussolini out of the war and intensify wherever possible discontent and revolutionary feeling on the Continent. The defeat of Italy would mean a point of attack against Germany and a diversion of her effort; even more important it would mean the release of the Navy to defend Britain against the growing danger of blockade. But a programme of European revolution involves a new coherence and determination in our foreign policy and propaganda, as Mr. Duff Cooper seemed to realise in his speech on Wednesday. But even Mr. Duff Cooper did not appear to realise that without a clear definition of war aims such propaganda is impossible in countries which, dominated by Hitler, will only be encouraged to resistance if they see a hopeful alternative. Without war aims, propaganda in Germany is impossible. Secondly, we need a far more intensive and organised plan of national production. Mr. Churchill, an inspired commander-in-chief, has not succeeded in organising the kind of Cabinet that wins a war. In the last war the victorious Cabinet consisted of a few exceptionally able men without departmental duties. The present Cabinet contains some men of no special ability, some whose ideas are irrelevant when it comes to meeting the Nazis, and some who are departmental leaders as well as members of the War Cabinet. The mixture is an unhappy compromise. We still have no co-ordinated scheme of supply of materials and labour; we still have three-quarters of a million unemployed; we still hover between the State control that is necessary for the war (or for peace, too, for that matter) and an out-of-date system of private enterprise. It is not yet clear whether we have any coherent shipping and agricultural policy. If consumption is to be cut down, then we need more rationing; if farmers are not to expect overseas fodder for their live stock, then they will need a longer period of guaranteed prices after the war is over than is at present offered them. In short, we are still inclined to talk of an indefinitely long war, stretching into 1944 or 1945, which we shall win, thanks to our traditional "staying power." That is a fatal attitude: what we have first to do is to win next year's campaign, on the farm, on the high seas, in the air and in the hearts of all the peoples of Europe.

The American Trade Unions

As a by-product of the presidential election may we now hope to see unity in the split ranks of America's trade unions? The Congress of the C.I.O. has met and has accepted the resignation of Mr. Lewis, which he promised, if he should fail to defeat Mr. Roosevelt. His successor, Mr. Murray, also a miner, is a Scotsman who began life as a pit-boy at Blantyre. Though he, too, is a stubborn fighter, trained in the same hard school round Pittsburgh as his Welsh predecessor, he is thought to be in this particular dispute a more moderate and conciliatory figure, who at least desires re-union, however difficult it may be to attain it. If Mr. Lewis was a difficult man of an aggressive and ambitious temper, Mr. Green of the rival organisation is at least as hard in his conservative obstinacy. Mr. Roosevelt is pressing for re-union, but much as we should desire it, we should not wish to see it consummated, save on terms that opened the future wide for the development of industrial unionism. Mr. Green's craft unions are an aristocracy which had lost all sense of fraternity towards the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, especially if they are negroes or foreign-born. When these unions, nearly equal in numbers, compose their feud, Labour in the U.S.A. may have a political future. A strike in the highly reactionary aluminium industry may be the first of several that will affect the production of aircraft. In Congress, meanwhile, there is likely to be a truce to controversial legislation till the new members take their seats in January. At the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate there will sit a new Chairman, Senator George, a conservative democrat and an opponent of the New Deal so extreme that the President had campaigned against him. Of Europe and European affairs he knows nothing at first hand. He may, however, be less obstructive than Senator Johnson, who would have sat in his chair had the Republicans won. He is a close friend of Mr. Cordell Hull, and may follow his inspiration.

The Indian Deadlock

Mr. Amery's statement to the House last week on India was deeply disappointing, since it showed that the Government is bankrupt in ideas for the reconciliation of the politically conscious part of this nation. The offer which Congress and the Muslim League have both rejected is withdrawn and there the matter ends. We regret that the chance of changing the political atmosphere by releasing Jawaharlal Nehru has been missed. It is, however, some little relief to discover that "rigorous" imprisonment for four years will not mean that he is to be deprived of books and other alleviations commonly granted in civilised countries to political prisoners. Since he was sentenced, many ex-Ministers and at least one ex-Premier of a Provincial Government have followed him into prison. We did not find Mr. Amery's recital of the number of Indians who have "volunteered" for military service impressive: in a country so abysmally poor, men can always be found who will serve for pay, but the total in relation to India's population is pitiably small, even if it should eventually reach half a million out of 370 millions. In a subsequent speech Mr. Amery threw out some hints for the remodelling of the abortive federal constitution. If smaller powers were given to the Centre and more to the provinces, Muslim hostility might be lessened: the boundaries of the provinces ought certainly to be re-drawn, though we fail to see how they can ever be made satisfactory until the smaller of the princes' States are absorbed. Finally, he suggested a new basis for the franchise, possibly occupational. If this meant the abolition of the present division into exclusive religious constituencies, it would be a great gain: peasants, for example, would vote together as peasants, and not separately as Hindus and Muslims. We welcome fresh thinking about these ultimate problems. But all this concerns the distant perspective of the political landscape, while in the foreground we face deadlock. From our side there must come a new offer, weighted no longer with qualifications that destroy it. From the Indian side we wish new men could be chosen to negotiate, where Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah have repeatedly failed.

Economic Notes (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

The Engineering Employers' Federation, in rejecting the claim of the engineering Trade Unions for an advance in wages, cites figures showing the average earnings of various grades of workers in July. Skilled men were then earning, on an average, just over £6 12*s.* a week, semi-skilled men £5 11*s.* 6*d.*, and unskilled men £4 11*s.* These earnings are for an average working week of from 58 to 59 hours, including, of course, a good deal of week-end work paid for at a special rate. No figures are given to show the earnings for women workers. Probably since July, when a special spurt was being made in order to face the threat of invasion, the number of hours worked has fallen, especially at the week-ends, which account for most of the very high earnings about which tales are told. In relation to these tales, the average figures now published by the employers do not sound particularly high, in relation to the long hours worked. Certainly they give no warrant for the view that the engineers as a body have exploited the war situation, or that employers have recklessly bid up the price of skilled labour. But the averages of course conceal very big differences as between firm and firm, and man and man. Very high wages paid to a few toolmakers in Coventry are poor consolation to a highly skilled man on time-rates in a job in which, for one reason or another, overtime cannot be worked. The real trouble about the wage situation is not that wages in general are too high, but that there is neither rhyme nor reason about them.

* * *

It is coming now to be widely recognised that a big mistake was made early this year, when it was decided that wages should be left to be fixed by ordinary collective bargaining, subject only to the prohibition of strikes and the reference to arbitration of differences that could not be adjusted by agreement. The consequence of this policy has been that wages have risen much faster in some trades than in others, and in some places than in others; and, as Mr. Keynes's plan of deferred earnings was rejected, this has meant wide differences in immediate purchasing power. There are quite as many cases of hardship from unduly low wages as of wastefully high wages; for example, where men have to work away from home but are not eligible for lodging and similar allowances because their transfer did not take place under any of the recognised schemes, or where, as I have said, overtime and piecework earnings are not forthcoming to supplement the basic wage. Personally, I should like to see the whole situation taken drastically in hand. I should like wage-*rates* to be put up to a reasonable level, but to be related for the war period to a longer working week of, say, 55 hours, with no overtime payable until these hours had been worked, and no extra pay for nightshifts, or week-end work. In effect, I should like to see the workmen in industry put as nearly as possible on an upstanding salary instead of a wage, and no more entitled to overtime than a manager or a professional man. This could only be done if wage-*rates*, as distinct from earnings, were raised considerably. But it would be sound economy to do it; and it would, I believe, help to give the workman a changed attitude towards his work. Above all, wages questions ought in wartime to be taken entirely out of the hands of the employers. The State, and not the employer, is really paying the piper, and the State ought to call the tune. Collective bargaining between Trade Unions and employers is a farce, when the State is actually footing the bill, and the employer is concerned not with the amount of current earnings, but only not to raise wage-rates in such a way as to make it difficult to reduce earnings when the war is over.

* * *

The general wage-policy which is badly needed would be much more readily accepted by the workers if it were combined with an effective tightening up of price-control and with real rationing, to the individual consumers instead of to the shops, of the goods which are going to be very scarce under the new orders limiting supplies. As matters stand, the limited quantities of goods that will be available will be bound to go largely to those who have enough leisure to go round the shops hunting for them—that is, in the main, to those who have reserve stores already, and therefore need them least. Clothing and similar supplies at any rate ought to be rationed on a basis which will ensure adequate quantities to large families, and to busy workers who can only shop infrequently and in a hurry. And the control over prices of miscellaneous foodstuffs—fruit, vegetables and cheese especially—ought to be a great deal tighter than it is.

* * *

These matters are important because unless we tackle them now it will be impossible to prevent a real inflation from setting in as soon as the grandiose plans now announced for mobilising the nation's

man-power reach the stage of actual execution—even if the execution is much less than 100 per cent. of the plan. If all these additional workers get into production before the Government has introduced any common wage policy, there will be the devil to pay. Such services as A.R.P. and A.F.S. will be denuded of their essential workers just when they are most needed; for, naturally, the places where industry offers the highest earnings are precisely those which the Germans are likeliest to bomb. In these places workers inevitably drift into relatively well-paid factory jobs from relatively ill-paid auxiliary services which cannot offer higher earnings because their rates are based on army scales of pay. Yet the fire-fighting and rescue services must, in these places above all, be kept adequately manned. Again, the right solution is surely to be found in paying the men in the auxiliary services an upstanding salary comparable with that of a munition worker—or, in part, by making the Army take over a large part of the work now done by civilians in these particular fields. There is going to be soon, despite the continued presence of our 800,000 unemployed, a real shortage of male labour in many parts of the country, and therewith a real danger that essential services will go unmanned because they are not allowed to offer wages at all comparable with those obtainable on other forms of war work.

The Economic Debate

"If the strategic genius of the Prime Minister and the fighting forces are not to be starved of men and material the principle of compulsion on all, property and man-power, will have to be introduced." This was the theme-song of three powerful speeches. Mr. Shinwell spoke first in the important debate on the Economic Front. He gave a realistic picture of the gravity of the situation. The offensive power of the enemy has increased, the shipping position was disquieting. Confronted with this position, the productive effort of the country had not increased since June. Consumption, on the other hand, shows no decrease. We were living on stocks. In order to mobilise our superior war economic potential it was necessary to curtail consumption to the minimum. This was not possible unless rationing was introduced in order to safeguard the position of the poorer classes. The man-power set free must be re-trained and re-employed. Productivity must be increased by concentrating production in the most efficient factories. Distribution must be rationalised. Those who become unemployed as a result of this economic mobilisation, both labour and employers, must be compensated, provided they are willing to undertake essential work.

Mr. Greenwood answered for the Government. He was obviously unhappy and did not attempt to rebut the criticism. He merely claimed that much had been accomplished—which nobody doubts, and that our vast potential striking power will in the end prove victorious—which is exactly what Mr. Shinwell asked. Clement Davies, in his usual vigorous vein, pointed to the emptiness of the speech. Mr. Hore-Belisha, in an unfinished speech, reiterated the main principles of economic mobilisation. If the Members of the House expected a clear answer by the Minister of Labour to the constructive criticism of the basic principle of our war economic system they were to be disappointed. Mr. Bevin made an—undoubtedly justified—attack on his predecessor, which he then had to explain away. But there was too little meat in his case; though he evoked cheers from the Labour Benches by emphasising the shortcomings of the employers, he did not explain away the lack of planning and co-ordination. The debate left the House unhappy and bewildered. The impression that the firm hand which led us through the military reverses is lacking on the economic front was too overwhelming.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS NUMBER

Next week we are producing our usual Christmas Books Supplement. As well as all the usual features there will be special contributions from John Betjeman, E. M. Forster, Richard Hughes, Rosamund Lehmann, John Macmurray, Myfanwy Piper, Edwin Muir, and Olaf Stapleton. The supplement will also include a selected list of books which have been noticed in our columns during the past year; together with the Publishers' announcements this may serve as a reminder to those who are choosing Christmas presents.

SPECULATIONS ON ITALY

MOST of us have been slow to build any tall structure of hope on the astonishing successes of the Greeks in Albania. We know that the Greek army was poorly equipped for modern warfare: the Italians had made no serious preparations to overcome a resistance they did not expect: but after a shock and a purge, we supposed that in the long run numbers must tell, especially in the air. To-day, we are facing the most welcome possibility of all—that the Italians cannot recover their spirit and may be driven back in ignominy to the coast. The brilliant stroke of our airmen against the Italian fleet domiciled in the inner harbour of Taranto suggests that this demoralisation may be general throughout the armed forces of the new Roman Empire. It should be possible, therefore, with the superb bases now at our disposal to prevent the landing of adequate reinforcements in Albania.

But will not Mussolini be driven, sooner or later, to pocket his pride and call in German help? His prestige and his popularity at home, in Africa and in Syria, will suffer heavily in that event. It is clear that Hitler must somehow and somewhere seek to make good what is a reverse for the whole Axis as a team. But he may not do it in the Balkan Peninsula. The full disclosure of Italian weakness has had its effect on all the ready reckoners of that peninsula. The Turks become every day a little firmer and it should not be assumed that even the divided Yugoslavs would open their frontiers to a German expedition without resistance. Best of all, King Boris of Bulgaria is still determined that he will not repeat his father's mistakes, and the Germans have had to admit that there is no prospect that he will adhere to the Axis this winter. It is possible, therefore, that Hitler, whose plans are never rigid, may revise his strategy and strike elsewhere. If he has to regard the Italians as a liability, he may be less willing to bestow upon them Nice, Corsica, Tunis and all North Africa. In that case he could offer something to Spain, which he seems now to regard as his exclusive sphere of influence and exploitation. Above all, he would be better able to reward the Government of Vichy for its loyal collaboration. We are not at all sure that this will be Hitler's plan, or that it will prosper if he attempts to realise it. Hitler may concentrate on his war against our shipping and he may revise his plan for the invasion of this island. But for an attempt to use the Spaniards and the French as a substitute for the Italians in the Mediterranean we must be prepared.

Civilian modesty need not deter us from drawing the broad moral from this situation. The most remunerative and hopeful enterprise on which we could now concentrate would be to hammer the Italians, until they either collapse or disturb Germany's plans by compelling her to hold the hand of this ally, as we had to do in the last war. Mussolini has turned the genius of this nation in a false direction. Gifted in braggadocio and the other arts of peace, it has little talent for war. It is not enough to perceive this opportunity: that will not give us the necessary numbers of mechanised divisions, though it should stimulate us to make a bold, we had almost said a rash, use of the resources we possess. Questions occur to us which for lack of information we cannot answer. Hitherto General Wavell, who is heavily outnumbered, has adopted, save in the air, a passive strategy for the defence of Egypt. But it is possible that the white troops at least in Marshal Graziani's army of invasion may be in no better moral condition than the armies the Greeks have routed. A bold commander, sure of his own men, might be justified in attacking, even with inferior numbers. An alternative move would be, while holding Graziani on the Libyan border, to make a bid to secure Syria. This could be managed only by offering the Syrians their independence, and it should be done with Turkish collaboration.

Apart from anything that might be risked in Egypt or Syria, public opinion has felt some disappointment as it watched the scale of our aerial attack on Italy. We do not forget that Naples, Bari, Brindisi and some munition works in the North have been bombed; still less do we undervalue the superb exploit at Taranto. We can well believe that the Greek aerodromes need to be enlarged and re-equipped. We are not calling, as some have done, for the indiscriminate bombing of Rome: to risk any injury to its priceless treasures of art and memory would be a vandalism that history would not pardon. But after making allowances for all this, what we have done in the air has so far been trifling when we contrast it with our operations over Germany. There are many tempting targets in this peninsula, notably its hydro-electric power stations, as well as the usual docks, railway junctions, arsenals, and munitions factories. The explanation of the reserve is probably technical; our resources do not permit as yet of more persistent attacks on Italy, upon a larger scale. But does a political motive also play a part in reinforcing this restraint?

We are content to make our point as a question, but it is a grave and disturbing question. When historians come to survey our policy towards Fascist Italy, from the Abyssinian affair to the present day, they will have to consider the hypothesis that haunts us. Why, at a time when Italy had no ally, did we shrink from using against her, when she challenged the League, either naval action or oil sanctions? Why did we tolerate the invasion of Spain and reward it with the Gentleman's Agreement? And why, during the first eight months of this war, did we allow the Italians to accumulate the oil they are using against us to-day? Why did we take so calmly the seizure of Albania? The answer cannot be simple and part of it is creditable. Mr. Chamberlain had a sincere horror of war, though he chose the worst way of staving it off. It is probable that he exaggerated Mussolini's power and efficiency, for he bestowed on him more than one extravagant public eulogy. Mussolini's regime is no worse to-day than it was five or for that matter ten years ago. The ultimate explanation may have been that Mr. Chamberlain and his friends shrank from weakening the Fascist regime, lest some combination of Left groups, in his view alarming and undesirable, should replace it. Is it still this fear that hampers the Government's policy? We cannot forget that Lord Halifax took office to carry on this policy, after Mr. Eden had perceived its dangers. We do not doubt that even he would be glad to-day to see Mussolini fall, but we suspect that he would try to delay that happy event, until some alternative team, conservative or fascist, were ready to take his place—some safe combination with a Prince of the House of Savoy at its head and Count Grandi or even Count Ciano as its Duce. In this way, it is argued, red revolution can be avoided and the spread of Russian influence in the Mediterranean.

This is, to our thinking, a policy that turns its back on all the lessons of history. When a regime has gone down in disgrace and defeat, no nation will seek to save itself by choosing its new leader among the junior members of the team that failed. When the chance does come, Italians will not want to be reminded of the lictors and their rods. They will turn to something at once more sober and more humane. We hope it will not be communism in its Russian dress. There are sounder forces in Italy that derive from the central traditions of European civilisation. If we ignore and antagonise these, we shall repeat the tragedy of Spain. The Spanish Republic, which was not Communist and followed a programme less advanced than that of our Labour Party, had to rely on Russia, because the democracies refused the right of its lawful Government to buy arms abroad. We cherish no illusions about the early success in Italy of any movement drawn from the Republicans, Socialists and Left Catholics, but it is there and not in the discredited ranks of the Fascist party that we should look for the leadership of to-morrow. The Foreign Office technique, here and elsewhere, is that of the drawing-room which plays with personalities. Suñer may be an objectionable pro-German, but Franco is a Christian gentleman: Hitler is impossible but Göring comes from a good family, or it may be Rauschning: Mussolini is a megalomaniac, but Grandi was popular in London society: Laval may be a rascal, but Pétain, or as some now say Weygand, is a loyal soldier. History does not march on these lines. When Hitler's New Order breaks, the personal likes and dislikes of Downing Street will count for nothing. In the crash, the men who lead will be those whom the broad masses trust: it will not seek them among the Dictators' satellites.

The mischief of these Conservative illusions, based on a pathetic old-world loyalty to class, is that they thwart and delay the efforts we should be making to-day to win the confidence of the European masses. We have our own ideas as to how this should be done. It cannot go far until we have issued some statement, however brief, of our constructive purposes in this war. It implies a readiness to treat our comrades among the refugees with friendly respect. But we are more concerned at this stage to point to the dangers we must avoid. We cannot call on the masses to rise, if at the same time we are toying with the idea of a Latin-Catholic bloc, which would differ from the New Order only in so far as its brand of fascism would be less dynamic and more reactionary than the Nazi variety, and clericalist rather than pagan. The mere whisper of such a design is enough to cause all the men who have risked their lives for democracy, whether in Germany, Austria or Spain, to look on us with distrust. What are they to think of us, when they learn that the Foreign Office has requested (though happily it did not order!) Dr. Negrin to quit this island, lest his presence should offend General Franco? We realise that the naval situation in the Mediterranean is precarious. But Franco's policy will be decided neither by gifts of gold vessels for his altars nor by a denial of the right of asylum to the brave men who fought him, thanks to us, unarmed. We have one hold over him, our blockade, which we must not relax. For the rest we would have the Foreign Office tell him that he will dishonour Spain and himself, if he executes Señor Caballero as he lately executed Señor Companys. We shall not win the leadership of Europe by offering it a form of Fascism a little less brutal but much less effective than that which led the Germans to victory.

THE HORDER REPORT

Two months ago Lord Horder finished a letter to the *Times* with these words, "The executive committee just formed to implement our recommendations and to deal with other aspects of the whole matter, may be trusted to remember that time is of the essence of the contract."

If this were not the case, if there were no danger of a repetition of the 1917 influenza epidemic, if there were no fear of ill-health interrupting war work and lessening the strength of the nation's resistance, it would be disproportionate to lay so much emphasis on the problems of civilian defence as on those of military attack. Yet after all these weeks since the Committee first reported, during which the nights have lengthened and the dangers to health increased with the deepening winter, the greater part of the "brief statement of actions taken by the Government upon the recommendations of the Committee" is concerned only with instructions that have been given to the appropriate authorities. But issuing instructions is not the same as getting things done. Lord Horder himself, speaking in the House of Lords, quoted a most striking recent minute of his Committee: "Although we are aware that some local authorities have realised the danger that confronts them, and have taken steps to avert it, the impression made on the Committee by its more recent observations is still profoundly disturbing."

Nor has the impression made on those who have been working in the East End shelters during the last two months been such as to reassure them on the action taken under each of the specific recommendations of the Committee. Let us take them one by one:

I (i)–(iii). The success of the publicity suggested by the Committee for surface and Anderson shelters has been limited for two reasons—danger from blast, and damp.

(i) The safety of surface shelters varies. It would be criminal to popularise some. The damp in many cannot be remedied, as they are built with no damp course and with the street gutter running through them.

(iii) The safety of Anderson shelters depends, as the Committee points out, on their being properly covered. But the loss of popularity of these shelters since the Blitzkrieg began lies in the fact that the wet weather began at the same time. No arrangement of planks and duck-boards can lower the depth of water standing in a large number of them.

(iv) Lighting and bunks have been provided in some communal shelters, but in some there would not be room for a bunk. In one area at least where bunks were installed, this did nothing to increase the popularity of these shelters even though the alternative accommodation was very crowded. The Government "action note" adds that bunks and lights have been provided in public shelters, too, but there are still boroughs which have only one shelter with bunks installed and others where few shelters have light adequate for reading or knitting. Yet bunks are essential in order to space people out, and so prevent them from breathing germs in each other's faces. The installation of bright lighting in some shelters has made all the difference between an atmosphere of depression and apathy and one of gaiety and enthusiasm. In one shelter—a church crypt—complaints were made by the wardens about the lighting over six weeks ago. Two weeks later one of the "appropriate authorities" was induced to visit the shelter in person and promised that lighting would be installed immediately. The place, which holds six hundred people, has still only four small electric light bulbs.

The serving of food in shelters is one other amenity which was not mentioned in the recommendations of the Committee, yet which is vital to protect the health of the shelterers. Many women and children have regularly to start queueing for their place before they can prepare a hot evening meal, and most workers have to get down to the shelter after work before they can snatch a hot meal, and go to work again directly the "all clear" sounds without so much as a cup of tea.

The next group of recommendations cover other methods of reducing overcrowding in the existing public shelters. It is fantastic

that after fifteen months of war a survey of possible accommodation should now have to be undertaken, and that after nearly two and a half months of the Blitzkrieg all available safe accommodation should not already have been requisitioned.

II. Local authorities have been deplorably slow in recognising self-chosen shelters, as recommended by the Committee. One shelter, beneath a steel and concrete warehouse of many stories, has been open ever since the Blitzkrieg began, but the owner naturally will not move the foodstuffs which cover practically the whole floor space until the borough takes over the shelter. Despite frequent promises this has not yet been done.

III. The Committee suggests the opening of some basements and railway arches as shelters. Miss Wilkinson says that 592 basements for 100,000 people have already been opened. This is good news, but in a number of cases, when basements were opened, bunks were not yet installed and no system of allocating places by tickets was in force, so that the overcrowding occurred again. The opening of a shelter is the one time when it is possible to limit numbers to those compatible with hygienic standards. On the other hand, the wisdom of opening railway arches is questionable. Existing railway-arch shelters are, without doubt, the worst in the whole of London. Not only does rain soak through from the track above, but railway lines are a definite military objective and can be clearly seen from a great height.

IV. The Government "action note" states that a considerable number of shelters belonging to commercial buildings have been opened for night use, yet anyone who knows London will be able to think of a score of large buildings with huge basement shelters which have nobody in them at night.

V. The tube system is now widely used, and can show the worst example of overcrowding, of bad ventilation, bad sanitation, and long queueing for places. Again this is largely due to the fact that it was left to people to take over the tubes themselves, and that they were not opened officially as the Committee originally recommended, with spaces allocated by ticket. Miss Wilkinson admits that a season ticket system is essential to do away with the scandal of all-day queues.

VI. The Government "action note" to the recommendation that the aged and infirm should be evacuated to leave room for the workers, states that four thousand have already gone to emergency hospitals. A few days after the recommendations were published, however, it was announced that no more people could be evacuated under this scheme for the time being as space was not available. Yet it had already been stated previously, on the highest authority, that space was available for up to ten thousand of these unhappy people.

VII. Despite the large-scale evacuation of children, nearly 150,000 are still left in London, and others are coming back from the country with their mothers. There are two indispensable conditions for the success of evacuation. The first is that at the country end communal facilities should be provided for cooking, washing, laundering, etc., for the mothers, and that day nursery centres should be provided for the children so that the friction between guests and hosts can be reduced to a minimum. Secondly, at the town end proper arrangements for cooking, laundering and mending, preferably in a hostel, should be made for those who are left behind, so that the mother may feel reassured that her husband and her "over fourteens" will be cared for.

VIII. The payment of shelter wardens is commendable if, and only if, they are those already freely chosen by the people themselves.

IX. It is a lamentable fact that the "action note" on the provision of sanitary equipment should be limited to "instructions given to the appropriate authorities," but it is certainly honest. In actual fact, closets of some sort have now at last been obtained in nearly all of the shelters. The problem now is that in a number of shelters they are so placed that the rainwater runs through them to the part of the floor where shelterers are lying. In others the contents of the containers are disposed of down a drain in the shelter itself, which is most insanitary.

The suggestions made under recommendations XV and XVI may be taken here also. It is true that air conditioning is not practicable in many cases, but in at least one case there is already an air-conditioning plant which only requires an extension to be added. This was promised five weeks ago by the authorities and a man from the engineer's department measured the wall a few weeks later. No action has yet been taken.

X, XI and XIII. The instructions given by the Minister of Health on recommendation X, that additional staff should be engaged to reinforce the M.O.H., go to the root of the problem. Yet, except in a number of progressive boroughs, which are not in any case the worst affected, these instructions have not yet been carried out. Admiral Evans and Miss Wilkinson constantly inspect shelters and promise that "something will be done." Doctor Mallon has toured shelters and promised canteens. None of these people, however, have any power to fulfil their promises except through the already overworked local authorities. Lord Horder himself, in his speech in the House of Lords, has summed up the situation.

"They (his Committee) could not help being struck by the lack of co-ordination between the different departments of local authorities resulting in no one official accepting detailed responsibility for problems arising out of the shelter conditions. They could not help observing that instructions were often issued to already overworked officials unable to cope with the volume of work presented to them, and with a staff inadequate for the purpose."

The position in one borough—and this is typical—is that the assistant M.O.H. now and then goes round all the shelters with one of the wardens from the Borough A.R.P. Control, with a man from the Engineer's Department, and with the head of one of the local voluntary units. Each time they have gone round with a different question in mind. First it was closets, then the damp, and now medical posts. Each time they take notes and promise that something will be done. Each time nothing is in fact done until weeks later, if at all. The problem is too big for the assistant M.O.H. He has a large number of other matters to deal with besides shelters. What is needed is an M.O.H. for Shelters in each borough, who can take detailed responsibility and who would be prepared to delegate some responsibility to an executive officer in each of the District Warden's posts.

Many doctors, at present sitting doing nothing in First Aid Posts, would be only too glad to organise their districts and to pay regular visits to the medical posts in shelters. The incidence of diphtheria is growing daily, and these doctors could also give at the shelters the protective inoculation which the Committee recommends, but which can only be obtained by walking from one to three miles to the nearest clinic.

It is not, however, only organisation at the periphery which is needed, but also better communication with the centre. Mr. MacDonald speaks of his Inspectors who go round encouraging and assisting the local Medical Officers. For them to be most effective they should come under the London Regional Department of the Ministry of Health especially concerned with health in shelters. And this should be under the direct control of Lord Horder himself, who could thereby take much of the burden off Mr. MacDonald's shoulders. Lord Horder's recommendations could then be transmitted directly through the Regional Officers to the Borough Officers and finally to the District Organisers, and this would apply equally to Liverpool, Birmingham and Coventry as to London.

Here, then, are the practical suggestions for future action based upon criticism of past mistakes. The publication of direct criticism of the authorities has not been lightly undertaken by those who have been working in the East End shelters during the last ten weeks. And it is only the repeated failure of the authorities to implement their statements and promises, even after many reminders and appeals, that has driven them to it. It is unfair on many of them for Miss Ellen Wilkinson to say in her recent speech at Oxford that "any suggestion that nothing substantial had changed in the last six or eight weeks was either malicious or ignorant or both." In one group of shelters, at least, those who spend nearly all their nights in them testify that if there has been any change, it is for the worse, simply because the wet weather has added the problem of damp walls and wet floors to the overcrowding, sanitation and ventilation.

Damp is a problem which is surprisingly omitted in the Horder Report, and yet it is the worst feature of the shelters at the moment. In some shelters only those people with umbrellas remain dry. In many trench shelters water lies several inches deep on the ground. These should all be immediately condemned, but many others which are damp could be made dry. In one shelter several leaks in the roof were pointed out to the authorities four or five weeks ago, and a promise was given that they would be seen to at once. At first nothing was done because, it was said, no labour could be obtained. The shelterers themselves, many of them unemployed, offered to do the job if a skilled foreman were found to direct them. Now the difficulty is lack of materials. Yet Mr. Morrison has said that he has obtained the cement available for these jobs. Miss Wilkinson now promises that shelters which cannot be cured of damp will be closed and alternative basement shelters provided. She also refers to negotiations with the Ministry of Supply for the release of a special type of heating stove.

Let the instructions be given by the experts, provide the organisation for transmitting them, release the materials, draft in some skilled foremen and encourage the people themselves to do the job—and they will have the shelters dry in a week or two. For the only miracles that have been performed have been, not by the administration, as Miss Wilkinson has said, but by the people whose courage and cheerfulness have never wavered in the face of the most desperate situations and the most trying provocation.

"FINANCIAL HELP"?

LORD LOTHIAN startled the American public last week-end by announcing that Britain needed "financial help," and that our gold and dollar holdings, with which at present we have to pay for American war supplies, are likely to be exhausted in the next six to twelve months. He was well advised to startle them. Up till now the question of Britain's ability to go on buying from the United States has been treated as too delicate for public discussion, and a false complacency has been encouraged among the American as well as the British people. But the American people have got to take a big decision—and it is for them to take it—on this issue before very long. They had much better take it, with full knowledge of the facts and after full discussion of them.

Britain and France could not have won the 1914–18 war without American economic help. Nobody would be likely to dispute that. In that war the Allies were not merely able to sell their huge investments in the United States, but could also borrow in New York. Even so, there was—unknown to the British public at the time—a severe financial crisis at the end of 1916 and in the first few months of 1917. Mr. Lloyd George had planned his programme of arms purchases from the United States without regard to our ability to pay. Mr. McKenna, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, protested that we should go bankrupt—but Mr. Lloyd George was not deterred. In the first two months of 1917 our power to borrow in New York was practically exhausted, and nobody at the time expected the United States to come into the war within the six months. The prospect of the Allies being unable to go on paying for American supplies, and therefore having to give up fighting, was all too real. Then suddenly, thanks to the sinking of the *Lusitania* and other German blunders, American opinion swung round and Congress had declared war by April. The problem of raising credits in the United States was solved—until after the war.

It left us with the famous war debts, which used once to be blamed, among other things, for the "Great Depression" of 1931–2. In 1932 Britain defaulted on her war debt to the United States. Three years later, as a practical protest, Congress passed the Johnson Act, which forbade war debt defaulters to borrow in the United States. In 1938, as the shadow of the European war grew, Congress passed the Neutrality Act, forbidding loans to any belligerent power. The theory behind this was that Pierpont Morgan's loans to Britain and France before 1917 had dragged America into the war. That famous financial house—so the isolationists argued—exerted sinister pressure on Washington because it would have gone bankrupt if the American Government had not taken over its loans. So Great Britain entered the present war doubly banned by American law from borrowing in the United States. (Canada, of course, not being a war debt defaulter, does not come under the Johnson Act, and is only precluded from borrowing by the Neutrality Act.) During the first 15 months of this war we have accordingly had to pay cash for our huge purchases in the United States. Naturally those purchases have—though the full figures are not available to the public—far exceeded our exports to the United States, even if Empire trade is taken into account. So we have had to pay the ever-mounting bill by the sale of capital resources.

How great were those resources, and how long could they be expected to last? In March, 1939, we had £670,000,000 of gold (at the then rate of exchange) in the Bank of England and Exchange Equalisation Account, according to the latest pre-war figures. Some of this was doubtless lost before September, 1939, and a good deal more was lost afterwards through timid and faulty exchange control methods. Over and above this were our foreign investments. Sir Robert Kindersley's most recent estimate gives the total of these in all countries, including the Empire, as £3,700,000,000 in 1938. Only part of this, however, represents immediately realisable foreign securities or foreign exchange. And naturally immediately realisable dollar assets are even smaller. The United States Federal Reserve Bulletin estimated that at the outbreak of war the United Kingdom dollar balances totalled $595,000,000, and marketable securities another $735,000,000. On top of this Canada was estimated to hold $355,000,000 of balances, and $500,000,000 of securities. This adds up to a total, before the outbreak of war, of about $2,200,000,000, or say, £550,000,000.

Lord Lothian was, of course, only speaking of our gold and immediately realisable dollars, when he said that the reserve would only last another six or twelve months. But, large as even that reserve is, Lord Lothian's prediction is not really very surprising. Over the whole of the past 15 months our purchases from the United States must have been very great, even in relation to these figures, and they are now rapidly growing. So much is obvious from our own weekly total of Government expenditure, from the frequent calling up by the Treasury of British-held American securities, and from the Americans' own figures of sales to us. It might be possible, if these immediately realisable dollars ran out, to convert some of our other foreign assets into dollars by one means or another. And without question this would be done, if the only alternative was to go short of war supplies. But Lord Lothian's statement can be taken to have established that there would be a serious crisis by the middle of next year if credits cannot be obtained in the United States.

So here is the issue before the American people. Would they really prefer to see Britain forced to abandon resistance to Hitler rather than lend us money? It is really not very much that we are asking. Hitherto the British Parliament, press and people have been so reluctant to offend American sentiment that we have not put our case to them at all. It is emphatically now time we did so. We are, as a people, deeply grateful for the revision of the Neutrality Act at the beginning of the war, and for the subsequent flow of raw materials. But we are frankly in need of something more if we are going to win this war. Practically the whole of the American nation now approves our cause, and a large part expressly regards it as their own. A great many Americans tell us from time to time what a courageous and even heroic fight we have been putting up in defending England against air attack in the last three months. Some Americans even go further, and urge us to fight more bravely and vigorously still, as they have been urging us on and off since the time of Munich.

We are not asking the Americans to fight. We do not ask them to man our aeroplanes, or warships, or merchant ships, or defend our coastline, or send troops to Greece, or any other threatened small country, or even to conduct their daily and nightly civilian lives under a shower of bombs. We merely ask them to lend us a little money, at interest, out of their overflowing wealth. That does not seem, in the annals of human history, a very presumptuous request. Is it really the wish of the American people to refuse to lend money to those they think so courageous? Is it really their policy to hand over to us destroyers, and then refuse the credits which would give us the ammunition those destroyers need?

In business terms, the issue is really one between the United States Government and its own industrialists. For all the money we wish to borrow would be spent on the goods those great men are engaged in producing. And since they have to be paid for those goods in dollars, it is obvious that, after Britain has no dollars left, either some more must be put at our disposal, or the industrialists just won't get paid.

Mr. Roosevelt himself recognised the urgency of the problem when he said last week that United States help for Britain was nearing its peak "under present conditions." One may probably infer that the President himself sees the need for action clearly enough, and even has a shrewd idea what form it should take. Neither the Johnson Act nor the Neutrality Act forbid the gift of materials to this country. Nor do they forbid loans to a neutral non-defaulting power, British or otherwise, which might lend the money on to us. But the precise nature of the expedient chosen is for Washington to decide, and is not of the first importance. If there is a will, a way can be found easily enough.

By the phrase "under present conditions" Mr. Roosevelt probably had in mind another delicate and first-class issue, on which the American people will also have to make up their minds very soon. At present American peacetime business is pursuing its normal profit-making way and using Britain's war orders as a sort of extra kick to the general prosperity. That is what Big Business likes, and that is what we ourselves tried to do in the Chamberlain period. Unfortunately, the amount of war materials that can be produced that way is strictly limited even in the United States. To beat Hitler it might be necessary to impinge on *laisser-faire* profit-making American business, and tell Mr. Henry Ford, for instance, that his works belong partly to the United States and not entirely to himself.

Against that horrible threat, Mr. Willkie and the whole Republican Party fought in the Presidential election. They were defeated.

It is now for Mr. Roosevelt and a Democratic Congress to say whether the destruction of Hitler is in their opinion worth the loan to Britain and her Allies of a little money, and the control of a small sector of American industry.

DOUGLAS JAY

A LONDON DIARY

LOOKING at Coventry a fortnight after the raid, the first impression is that the troops have done a very efficient job in clearing up the ruins. The Army is now helping the local departments to restore the utility services; as an example of good progress I note that every district appears to have water supplies again. Precautions are being taken against typhoid; the medical profession of the City is being mobilised to fight it. The public has readily realised the need for inoculation. Works doctors are inoculating the employees at the factories and constant appeals are made by the Ministry of Information loud-speaker vans, which tour the City, to people to boil their water and their milk. Each day the National Emergency Committee meets. This is a new body, born of the desperate needs of the stricken City. It includes not only all the City officials, but representatives of the Ministries—War Office, Health, Labour, Food and Transport. It was a nice point at the outset who should officiate at this marriage of the State and Local Government. For a few tense moments it looked as though the War Office might take over, but Alderman Halliwell, stalwart chairman of the City's Emergency Committee, seized the gavel and said, "Gentlemen, I am in the chair." Since then work has been harmonious. Each morning decisions are taken on the urgent jobs; the various local departments state their labour needs and the Army or the Ministry of Labour meets them. Such a fusion of State and Local Government is forced by a situation far beyond the capacity of any council.

* * *

Unfortunately, what exists at the top is not always reflected at the bottom. The homeless and other raid victims have the same old dreary pilgrimage from office to office. An attempt has been made—and, indeed, was being made when the havoc was let loose—by the Council to get all its relief departments together, so that homeless people could find information and relief of all kinds at one centre. Unfortunately, that centre was smashed and has had to be re-created. In this war a shadow organisation must always be ready. On the question of food, again, the emergency organisation of "first-aid feeding" by mobile canteens saved a serious food situation. But a population must not be indefinitely kept on a diet of soup, tea and sandwiches. "Municipal Cafeterias" are being established. One is functioning well, but communal feeding of the square-meal type was not introduced quickly enough. A professional caterer has been appointed director, and qualified and well-paid chefs are being employed. Another urgent need is for accommodation. And there must be a Government decision about partially damaged houses. People evacuated cannot afford to pay the rents of two homes. Perhaps the most immediately serious problem is to get furniture—and Coventry, city of well-paid artisans, has good furniture—out of the houses where the weather is ruining them. Appeals by the authorities to removal contractors are no use; they are too busy making money out of private contracts.

* * *

Mr. Morrison's reforms in the treatment of aliens of enemy origin seem to offer a prospect of the release of large numbers, chiefly by opening wide to the younger men the door into the Military Pioneer Corps. My chief anxiety is as to how well and how quickly the tribunals will do their work. So far they have been intolerably slow and capricious. There are two questions I want particularly to put to Mr. Morrison. Leaving aside for the moment the general issue of refugee internment, does Mr. Morrison not think that when a promise of release is made it should be acted on at once? I can see no excuse for keeping a man behind barbed wire after his case has been fully examined and notification given that he is to be freed. Secondly, has Mr. Morrison, among his many duties, looked into conditions in our prisons to-day? I suggest, for instance, an inquiry into Brixton. I have no doubt that most of those shut up in Brixton are there for good reasons. I am far from wanting Fascists or pro-Nazis roving about at will. But I cannot believe that the worst characters or the most dangerous political characters should be kept in solitary confinement for 23 out of the 24 hours, which seems to be the rule in Brixton. Whatever a man's crime he should be entitled in this country to decent treatment in prison, to a fair hearing, access to a lawyer, visits, under strict supervision if necessary, from friends and relatives. It should be added—though the argument for prison occupation and proper exercise remains in any case—that sometimes mistakes are made. There have been, and probably are still, individuals in Brixton who were shut up in error. Occasionally someone is released with no charge against him after months of solitary confinement. And all solitary confinement, even for the most guilty, is supposed to have been long abolished in this country.

* * *

What is one to say of the late Lord Rothermere? In private life the best of sons, the most affectionate of parents, the most generous of men. Entirely simple in his habits, but a vivacious companion and a good mixer. As an employer generous and kindhearted, etc., etc. Or is one to recall Lord Baldwin's ferocious attack and his oblique reference to people whom he would not have on his doorstep? It is, perhaps, too uncomfortable to ask at this moment whether Lord Rothermere's business success was any advertisement for democracy or his financial success an advertisement for our social system. Who would dare now to ask anyone to fight for the system which made him successful and rich? Before 1914 he fitted into the world only too well: after the end of the last war he was lost and this explains his flounderings. He lost his confidence and became dominated by fear: fear for the circulation of his papers, fear for the American market and his own vast fortune, fear of Bolshevism, fear that the Nazis would not succeed in stopping it, and that we should not co-operate with them, fear of war and then finally fear again of the Germans, and back to the old pre-war fear that we should not have enough arms to defeat those whom he had boosted to the skies not long before as the saviours of Europe. This, with a touch of the family megalomania, explains why he picked up Mosley, Hitler and Hungarian countesses and then dropped them; and also explains why even on the dog-does-not-eat-dog principle there is something diffuse and strained about the obituary notices which Fleet Street has put out this week.

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The countryside looked very peaceful and ordinary from the railway-carriage window; it shared my attention with the morning papers and the *Ritzkrieg* by Michael Barsley. You will remember extracts in recent issues of this journal, with admirable Thurberesque illustrations by the author. The book is out now, published by the Pilot Press (3*s*. 6*d*.). Is it true, I asked myself, that the Harristocracy still wears the tweeds of a sporting life untroubled by this spot of trouble with Germany? The *Observer* would not have it so. Says Mr. Garvin:

> Victory this time demands nothing less than the utmost of our strength, brains, fortitude and sacrifice. . . . Looking to the harsher side of the picture we must shrink from none of its realities. . . . The word for this winter is "Everything in."

But the advertisement pages of the *Observer* seemed to tell another story:

> Torquay Hotel. Tranquility. Security. Luxury beds, lounges, sun parlour. Strictly inclusive rates. Give early morning tea/coffee, morning paper. Fruit at meals. Afternoon tea with cakes and sandwiches. Baths. Boots. Garage. Fire. Superb chef. Level road to sea. Rock air-raid shelter.

Paradise indeed. I lifted my eyes and there only a field away were the pink coats of the hunt as I remember them before this war and the last war, in childhood and in prints of Old England.

* * *

"AS TO THE MANOR BORN."

Michael Barsley tells one quite a lot about the riders and their friends. Lady Standaghast, Colonel Bogus, Katharine Kensington and General Powet (whose patriotic verses are excellent satire). There is real social content in his satire. The inevitable criticism of *Ritzkrieg* is that he has only one type of joke—the pun with a bite in it—and that gets as tiring as other tricks if repeated too often. Sometimes it precisely comes off, as, for instance, in this picture "As to the Manor Born." At the beginning of the war Michael Barsley published a clever book in verse, *Grabberwocky* (Murray). Shortly his third book is appearing, *Alice in Wunderground* (Murray). If he has found a third type of wartime humour he will have an established reputation.

If some of the departmental arrangements for the succour of war victims appear crude and inequitable it must be admitted that in the final stage—the obsequies—the authorities are prepared to go to considerable trouble to establish a fine and equitable discrimination. In time each form of war service will be associated with a particular qualitative and quantitative combination of escorts, Union Jacks, firing parties and Ministerial expressions of sympathy, and for the ordinary incentives of life there will be substituted these rewards of dying. Some of these necrological refinements remind me of the tariff once published by an American mortician.

For composing the features, $1.
For giving the features a look of quiet resignation, $2.
For giving the features the appearance of Christian hope, $5.

* * *

Advertisement outside ladies' hairdresser:

If Hitler comes to your home, don't let him find you with straight ends; come and have them permed here.

* * *

The following conversation took place in a railway train last week. You won't believe it, but it is none the less true. It comes straight from Shakespeare's clowns. Corner seat remarked that he wished he had never been born. Man opposite said that to say that was equivalent of saying he did not love his mother. Third man said that a man who does not love his mother does not know his mother and that's the same as saying he's a bastard. Fourth man chipped in to say "No, it's a man who doesn't know his father, that's a bastard." "All right," said the man who first introduced the illegitimacy theme into the symposium, "then a man who doesn't know his mother is next door to a bastard. And I'm sitting next door to a bastard now." Uproar. An elderly woman with a shawl over her head addressed the last word to the original speaker. "Duckie," she said, "I wish you'd never been born too. And that's the only word I do agree with."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to R. D. Poland.
All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

. . . The ordinary man has the stubborn feeling that hierarchy is necessary in society, and he has no natural objection to wealth being the main qualification for the higher ranks of the hierarchy. For on the practical side the average working man still believes that the possession of wealth is the best and perhaps the only test of capacity.—*Bristol Evening Post.*

"Even though people are evacuated they still like to dress for dinner," I was told at one of London's first-class dress salons.
"Prices for dinner gowns work out from twenty-five to forty guineas—about the same as they do for the old style evening dress.
"The dinner gown is considered more in keeping though with the situation. It is altogether on simpler lines, but as good a quality."—*Daily Mirror.*

A picture which appeared in your interesting paper of girls in a Hawaiian costume is most regrettable, especially if presented at a Y.M.C.A., or to the troops. They could have had a more suitable tableau or play.—Correspondent in *Daily Mail.*

CAN FARMING SURVIVE?

I

WE talk too glibly about the desirability of maintaining an agricultural industry in this country. We assume too readily that all are agreed that it is a necessary thing to do, possibly because the average person finds it easier to say "Yes" than "No" to this proposition. Some answer affirmatively because they have never really thought about it, some because they have rather sentimental feelings about the land. But when it comes down to creating conditions in which agriculture can flourish, there is a notable falling off in the number of supporters. It is much the same position as when one asked people say ten years ago if they believed in the League of Nations. To say "No" was churlish and almost immoral, but when it became necessary to back faith with deeds, the willingness to make sacrifices or take risks was lacking.

Let us get our minds quite clear on one point before thinking any further about maintaining our home food growing industry. It cannot be done unless we are willing to face dearer food. Even if farmers were prepared to fulfil their imaginary role of working at a yearly loss, the workers would not be indefinitely forthcoming to follow a calling that gave them a lower standard of living than other industries. This vital principle, that the labourer is as worthy of his hire in agriculture as in other occupations, has now been recognised, and recognised by the Trade Union movement as a whole. It is one of the best things that has so far come out of this war. There can be no going back on it. As Lord Addison has pointed out, when coal miners have asked for a reasonable wage, they have not said: But this will make coal much dearer. They have rightly insisted that they are due fair recognition in return for a national service.

But more than one election has been lost on the "Dear Food" issue, and those who hope that a happier chapter on the land will open at the end of the present conflict will be making a tragic mistake if they underestimate the difficulties in the way. There are two schools of thought as to what the position will be at the end of the war regarding our food supplies. One considers that most of our foreign investments will be gone, or worth nothing, and therefore we shall be compelled to grow the food at home because it will not be coming here in the form of interest on these investments; what we import will be hardly paid for by our exports. The other takes the opposite view and points to the huge surpluses of food that are now piling up in some of the exporting countries. The New World, they say, together with other countries, will continue to be mainly agricultural, anyhow for some time. Food will be their chief export. Its plentifulness will ensure that for a period large quantities of food will be exchangeable for comparatively small quantities of manufactured goods.

Now even if this first school turns out to be correct, it implies a less affluent state of affairs for this country, and a state in which it may seem desirable to get as much food as possible in return for every ton of other goods we can sell abroad. This may be taking a short view; I think it is. But the long view requires some extraordinarily skilful putting over, especially in so vital a matter as food, that hits each member of the community, rather literally "where he lives," several times a day. A more prosperous life on the land is not a ripe plum waiting to fall into farmers' laps as soon as hostilities cease. They must fight for it more intelligently than they have ever fought before. Hard as it may sound, the bulk of the community are not interested in paying more for their food just to enable farmers to make a living. The appeal must be a wider one than that.

There are both domestic and international considerations that must be taken into account. Taking home considerations first, one of the worst obstacles that must be defeated is the idea that has got about that farmers are the inefficient misfortunates of the community. Even if it were true, it would be a cardinal error of publicity for farmers to say so, and yet they have been saying so for years. That is not the way to persuade the rest of the community of their value. Taking the farming industry as a whole, however, it is untrue to say that they are outstandingly inefficient, although few would deny that there is room for improvement in this respect. It would be remarkable if it were not so. The first thing, therefore, is to break down this view of the farmer, that is fairly general. Then there is this question of paying more for our food. The coal miners successfully overcame something very similar by stressing the claims of the miners to a just reward; other industries have done the same. It is not as though farmers have a bad case in this respect. Before the war, the level of food prices was only some 40 per cent. above the 1914 levels, while the price level of almost equally vital items in the cost of living, such as rents, fuel and lighting and clothing, averaged 84 per cent. above 1914. If wheat in 1939 had been grown and harvested for nothing, transported here from abroad for nothing, and milled for nothing, the 1939 loaf would still have cost approximately as much as the 1914 loaf. A large part of these increases are due to the higher wages people in these other industries are earning. I still find farmers who do not appreciate the immense value to them of the wartime increase in farm wages together with the increased prices to pay them. Quite apart from its usefulness in attracting good men to the land and keeping them there, it gives farmers as allies the wage-earners in the industry and through them the wage-earners in other industries, the very people whose support they most need. It is an invaluable alliance.

These are the two worst obstacles; there is no reason to suppose that they cannot be overcome. But the attack on them calls for long views and skilful tactics. Certainly farmers will have to give away something if they are to obtain in return sacrifices from the consumer that agriculture may flourish. They must make the

consumer feel assured that his good money is not being spent on bolstering up inefficiency. In the third Report of the Herring Board the following words occur:

> "There is an almost incredible ignorance on the part of some persons in the industry of the economic factors which affect their own business"; it adds that a considerable proportion of those concerned do not desire "the placing of their business upon an economic basis. What they do desire, and have repeatedly asked for, is that they should be enabled to continue on their old uneconomic lines and that the losses consequent upon their doing so should be met by Treasury grants and subsidies."

It is essential to the security of agriculture that farming should not be open to such criticism and that the Marketing Boards and any system of subsidies or price fixing should not shelter inefficient producers. It may be that the best safeguard in this respect would be the continuance of the present wartime system of County Agricultural Committees and Liaison Officers, responsible to the Minister of Agriculture, and through him to Parliament, for proper use of the land and efficient farming in the areas in which they have jurisdiction. It seems more than likely also that the consumer would demand, as part of the price, some sort of independent body to supervise the general administration of various commodities such as milk, meat, poultry, etc. There is every indication that the public will not stand for unlimited power in the hands of producers' boards, whose responsibility, they argue, should end with the production and wholesale marketing of any given commodity. For the life of me, I cannot see anything in this of which the producer need be afraid. He does not normally make such exorbitant profits that he need fear the intervention of impartial persons where prices are concerned; in fact his position would be far stronger if an independent body were in existence to endorse the prices he had negotiated with his buyers. If price negotiations between the two broke down and an independent body had to arbitrate, the organised producer would be in exactly the same position as he was before the war, except that he would know that the arbitrators were thoroughly conversant with the matter on which they gave judgment. Moreover, there would be this further consideration, and a most important one. If any sort of rationalisation of distribution is to take place (and it looks as if, after the war, more of our energies will have to be devoted to production and less on taking round the washing we have been doing for one another), an independent body with the sanction of Parliament behind it is the one to carry through such action. It is not the job of producers' boards to do it, and they have not shown the slightest indication of being equal to the task, or even of any inclination to undertake it. But if there is scope for such rationalisation, its purpose would be to reduce distributive costs and thereby the retail price of food. This would be one of the most effective things we could do in any policy for getting better prices on the farm and meeting "dear food" criticism.

Something on these lines, I suggest, would form a reasonable basis for approaching the general problem. But farmers must also find a means of putting their case much better to the public. They must present their industry as vital to the well-being of the community and induce the community to respect it as a well-conducted industry. There is only one way to do this, by publicity. It need not necessarily be the spectacular, expensive publicity of hoardings and posters. It can be done more effectively and subtly by seeing that a regular flow of the right sort of news goes out to the press, news of achievement rather than of defeat, news to kindle enthusiasm and respect for a calling to which so many not engaged in it are already well disposed. It could be done quite inexpensively, say, for a start, for something under £5,000 a year. This is not very much for an industry with an annual output valued at £250,000,000. Raising the money would be only a minor difficulty, for the N.F.U. and the Milk Marketing Board between them could provide double that sum and not notice it. It is unbelievable that they would be so parochially minded as to refuse merely because they would be benefiting some farmers who were not members of either organisation. The blunt truth is that there are not, at the moment, any other farming organisations that have the money to put up, and it must come from the farmers themselves. I am convinced that something on these lines is vital to agriculture if it is to secure its rightful place in the new world that is coming, and even if this were to be a five-year war, now is none too soon to begin.

So much for the main difficulties and possible ways of overcoming them. But agriculture also holds many winning cards. Foremost among them I would put public good will towards farming and the instinctive belief that we ought to make use of our soil. In the transition period to peace there are likely to be idle hands; there will be an opportunity to couple them with idle acres, and rather more successfully and scientifically, it is to be hoped, than after the last war. Again, the growing realisation (which need not be kept dark) of the eventual threat to the world's food supplies through the exploitation of the soil in lands overseas strengthens the case for seeing that our soil, at least, is kept in good heart and fit to produce the optimum amount of food. Further, whatever else happens as a result of this war, it is certain that our overseas investments will be reduced at the end of it and, even if we export goods to buy some of our imported food, there will not be the same pressure of imported food that must come here if the interest on investments is to be paid. Nor can we leave out of account the growing tendency to think that money and trading may not, after all, be everything and that farming can offer a way of life that brings its own satisfaction, paying some of its dividends in contented independence. Men in many walks of life to-day yearn for "a little bit of land of their own," if only it could be managed. We must see that it can be managed and that an agricultural calling is open to as many people as possible, but on ordered lines. For we must steer a course between the straggling chaos of bungaloid poultry-keeping and agriculture made safe only for the big banking accounts. Just as the best publicity for farming is efficient farmers, so a vigorous, well-populated countryside, expressing life in its own terms, is the best guardian of agriculture's place in the national life.

These are some of the domestic considerations, in very sketchy outline. But events in recent years, culminating in the war, have introduced international factors of the very first importance to agriculture at home. I will try to deal with these in the next article.

L. F. EASTERBROOK

LOOT

MANY people have been surprised by the number of cases of looting after air raids that have been reported in the papers. And what surprises them most is that the men accused of looting are so often not members of the criminal classes, but citizens who have joined some branch of anti-air-raid service and who have been risking their lives for their country. No doubt the cases of looting are few in comparison with the number of men and women engaged in defence work; but the fact that even a few otherwise excellent patriots can pause from their work, when a building has been bombed, to appropriate field-glasses, clocks, watches and cigarette-boxes seems to throw a sinister light on human nature.

I am not sure, however, that the ordinary looter is the villain he sometimes appears to be. I believe that many looters in time of war or riot commit their thefts in a spirit of semi-innocence. Many of them, I am sure, would not steal in normal circumstances. If they found your note-case on the road with your address in it, they would restore it to you. If you overpaid them at the counter of a shop, they would give you back the superfluous money. When things are lying about, however, in wrecked shops and houses, they seem to some people to be anybody's property. "If I don't take that handbag," the female looter says to herself, "somebody else will"; and she appropriates it with a good conscience. She may even convince herself that it would be a sin to waste such an opportunity to do herself good without doing anybody else any harm.

Looting is one of the oldest concomitants of war. Kipling sang of it in one of his ballads. In Belfast in the old days public-houses were freely looted during riots, and a Protestant rioter did not feel that he was violating the principles of his religion in making off with a bottle of whiskey from the smashed premises of a Catholic publican. During the Dublin insurrection of 1916, there was a considerable amount of looting by people who thought they might as well take advantage of a situation for which they were not responsible. A woman, seeing an attractive pair of shoes in a broken shop-window would reason with herself: "If those shoes are left there, somebody will steal them"; and to prevent this theft she would carry them home.

I remember a soldier's telling me how during the last war he was in a French town that was badly shelled and how he found himself among the debris of the chief local bank: "There I was," he said, "and I had never seen so much money in my life. Wads and wads of notes lying all over the place. 'There's no use leaving this here,' I said to myself. 'Somebody also 'll only come and take it.' And I stuffed as much into my pockets as they could hold. It's the only time I have ever felt really rich. Then we were moved to another town, and I went with my wads of notes into an *estaminet* and called for beer. When the landlady brought the beer, I handed her a note, and she looked at it and said: 'No bon,' At first I couldn't make out

what was the matter, but it appeared that every French town had its own paper money in those days and that money that was good in one town mightn't be worth the paper it was printed on in another. Besides, my bank was a heap of ruins, and, I suppose wasn't paying anybody: I felt properly sold. Still it was worth it to feel so rich with all that paper in my pocket. I felt for three days just as I would feel now if I was told that I had won the Irish Sweep."

I do not wish to apologise for looting. Obviously, it is a crime, especially on the part of those who are on their honour to protect other people's property. At the same time I think it is a crime which a fairly decent man or woman may in certain circumstances be tempted to commit. It is theft, but not always the theft of a born thief. It is often an appropriation of perquisites rather than stealing of the baser sort.

Most of us make distinctions of this sort between one form of dishonesty and another. Few people, for example, regard poaching as being on the same level as pocket-picking. If we do not shoot or fish, we do not look on it as one of the deadly sins to steal a pheasant or a salmon. We can endure these raids on our neighbours' property with equanimity. If we happen to fish, however, our moral values undergo a change. Anger rises in us at the news that, while we were asleep, young men from a neighbouring village made a raid on our precious salmon. We think of them, not as amiable boys in search of adventure, but as young blackguards. And our attitude to orchard-robbing is as variable. If we do not possess an orchard we rather like the notion of a schoolboy's climbing a garden wall and committing the venial sin of stealing a few apples. How often, on hearing of such a thing, benevolent old men who do not own orchards have smiled tolerantly and commented: "Boys will be boys. I was young myself once." Who is there, however, who has ever welcomed the intrusion of a small boy into his own orchard? Only a saint, I imagine, or a man with an extremely large orchard. Speaking for myself as one who has never possessed more than a small fruit-garden, I can say that never have I seen strange children disappearing over the gate with their loot in their pockets without appreciating the feelings of the man who longs to go after such juvenile criminals with a horsewhip.

How far the ordinary human being is born honest, it is hard to judge. Few country boys are so naturally honest that they would refuse to enter a field and purloin a turnip to be eaten raw by the wayside. There are so many turnips in the field that the child reasons that the farmer would not miss one of them. He feels that he can satisfy his appetite without doing the farmer an injury. A good deal of petty theft, I think, is the result of similar reasoning. One hears occasionally of domestic servants who steal, and many of them do so, I fancy, because they imagine that their employers are much richer than they are and will not miss what is taken. I have heard of a manservant who used regularly to give away butter, tea, sugar and so forth from his employer's larder to his friends. Probably, he felt that he was distributing charity which his employer could well afford. He was said to be a charming fellow and in most respects trustworthy.

The fact that we have so many words of a mitigating kind for stealing suggests that we do not always regard it as a major offence. We speak of "pinching," "scrounging," "prigging," and (when I was a child), "truffing." I suppose people who steal ash-trays from restaurants would regard their action as "pinching." There are even people who pinch soap. Some boys cannot resist the temptation of pinching a pair of scissors if it is left on an office table. Pencils are pinched, fountain-pens are pinched, notepaper is pinched. Pinching is particularly common, I imagine, where it is not an individual that is to be robbed, but an establishment. The human conscience, for example, does not appear always to function when it is a matter of cheating a railway company. There are small boys who would not rob each other but who have no scruple in stealing from a sweet shop. A man who had served in a large drapery store told me once that nearly all the boys in the place stole: it is only fair to say, however, that he put this down to the bad example of the heads of the establishment in cheating and tricking their customers.

On the whole, it is remarkable, in view of how much civilisation has been built up on stealing, that human beings are so honest as they are. History is to a considerable extent a record of stolen territories and stolen treasures. And, not content with robbing foreigners, powerful men in various nations have robbed their own people. Even to-day there are men who without a qualm commit that act of theft against the public—the closing of a right of way. Finance, too, has had its share of powerful thieves—robbers of the widow and orphan, as the sentimental Victorians used to call them. In spite of all this, however, most men and women seem to me to be more or less honest. They have an instinctive antipathy to theft. No one quite likes Jacob after hearing how he stole Esau's blessing. It is true that people admire Robin Hood, but that is because the people he robbed were so rich that his activities were more like pinching than like stealing. As for Falstaff, he, too, is a thief whom men have taken to their hearts, the reason in his case being that he was a humorist of genius who talked magnificent prose.

As a rule, however, we like other people to be honest. Honesty makes for the general convenience to such a point that it is almost indispensable in human society. If we were all thieves we should have to keep all our possessions under lock and key, as some men lock their whiskey in a tantalus. We should not dare to leave our first editions lying about for fear a visitor might make off with them. We should not be able to give a dinner party without apprehension, because one of the guests might pocket some precious pieces of silver. We should have to keep a constant watch on our gardens for marauders among the flowers. A police system in such a society would be a waste of money, for, presumably, the police would be as dishonest as the rest of us. Perhaps it was because they dreaded the possibility of such a state of things—in which nobody could trust anybody—that men invented those severe laws for the enforcement of conventional honesty, as a result of which a man could be hanged or transported for life for stealing a wretched forty-shillingsworth of somebody else's property.

There is nothing truer than the excellent proverb, instilled into the minds of the young—"Honesty is the best policy." It is, indeed, the only possible policy for a happy community. And I am sure we should all be better if we gave up, not only stealing, but pinching, scrounging, prigging, truffing and looting. It would be much easier, I imagine—or, at least, I hope—than giving up tobacco. Y. Y.

WALKING ALONE

BACK through the universal darkness, hands upon eyes,
I follow the path of prayer,
Stripping the action from old histories,
Layer after layer;
Casting them down to mark the road's return
Lest I should lose my way
In this dark journey where no beacons burn
Before the dawn of day,
The day of man, and his awakened brain,
His wheel of thought, spinning upon desire,
The swift direction to a wayward fire.

This shall be light enough. There is no other.
Behind my hands, behind the lidded eyes
Heavy as ingots with the weight of thought,
I follow a gleam which none may smother,
No dust of earth, no star-dust from the skies,
No obscuration that false guides have brought
To-day, in my own life, or in the past
Of my long speculation over time,
Human disaster, the ruinous, vast
Occasions of mankind, base or sublime.

Poor traveller, alone with living,
I grope toward a way I cannot find,
Receiving nothing, and that nothing giving
Back through the humours of my mind,
Grim charity and cold benevolence
That love and minister to passing ghosts,
Marking them as a mockery of sense,
The sense of time and all its vanished hosts.

Yes, I pass them on my way;
But as a woodman through a forest passes
The pressing foliage, leaves numberless,
A multitude that makes the light of day
Something beyond and unbelievable:
Or as a tiger through the tropical grasses
Shouldering past each pollen-heavy tress
And spilling a million seeds.
So I through other centuries, and deeds
Innumerable and fruitful as the grass,
Urged by my hunger, pass.

The thinking mind is like that beast of prey.
It kills for joy and drinks the active blood.
It has no scruple for the world it treads,
But murders as it goes, and does not stay;
Following where its icy passion leads,
Ignoring present deeds half-understood,
Intent on those of yesterday,
The sights, the sounds,
The dead flesh and the congealing wounds.

Who is this monster within me, that dissembles
Prayer, and studies humility?
What is its purpose under the warm sky
Of the world, where the fruitful raincloud tumbles
And stirs the earthy odours, the must,
The humus, the fur, the velvet skin,
The innocent clinging and the forms of lust
That clasp, and bring forth life, and know no sin?

But thought is sterile, pure and cold.
It hunts alone, and has a virgin greed
Not of this world. Its hunger is old,
More ancient than creation, before earth,
God's seventh day; before his first
Woke, conscious of primeval thirst,
And in a self-contorting motion
Of anger in the loins of mirth,
Created all that future life should need,
Heaving and fertile Ocean.

But thought looks out upon the sea, and knows
Itself more ancient, more unsatisfied.
It does not dread the storm, the swollen tide.
Thought, with its feather-blows,
Opens what nature never shall divide.
It seeks the very presence, then will dare
To touch the wounded hands, the wounded side,
And after its cold ecstasy of prayer,
Lift the dead eyelid from the dying eye,
And whisper to the God, "Thou shalt not die!"

RICHARD CHURCH

MAGIC CASEMENTS: THE ART OF THE COMIC STRIP

RIGHT round the central shrine of the temple of Angkor Vat runs a vast frieze of graphically sculptured figures. A deep arcade shelters it from the blaze of the midday sun; overhead the bats depend in withered bunches, squeaking and rustling dryly when a dream disturbs them; and along the walls slide the endless episodes of the *Ramayana*, the Monkey God among his hordes of simian warriors hastening into battle, heroes and demons and demi-divinities and their consorts and concubines. Malevolent personages have been stained a dark red by splashes of betel-juice, the good endowed with a lovely lustrous patina by the caressing touch of appreciative hands through the last six centuries. The drama flows on and on. A pilgrim who wandered round to the very end of the story might start a second circuit without being quite sure where he had begun again. Not only would the frieze satisfy his sense of drama, it would also flatter his appreciation of continuity. And, in a life made up of irregular movements and spasmodic pauses, any continuous rhythm or regularly sustained pattern is always soothing.

Hence, I suppose, the enormous, the growing and (for some of us at least) practically irresistible attraction of the modern comic strip. It has other charms (a few of which I shall attempt to detail), but none is more potent than the fact that, week after week and, if the strip is moderately successful, year after year, the same preposterous narrative straggles ahead across miles of newsprint, changing and flagging and picking itself up again, but never ending. Its protagonists belong to an ageless and dateless world. Which of her admirers, except myself, remember that Belinda Blue Eyes, whose extraordinary adventures and curious emotional vicissitudes decorate the back pages of *The Daily Mirror*, started life as the daughter of an English earl? Several years ago she was kidnapped by a band of vagrants: but her origins, together with the odd succession of middle-aged supporters through whose existences she has wriggled and pouted and twinkled, have long since disappeared beneath the horizon of history. The point is that she is still with us: that I shall open my eyes to Belinda to-morrow as I opened them yesterday: and that, although she will annoy me as much as ever and I shall continue to dislike her looks as I abhor her moral code, she has now become an indispensable part of the business of getting up. So it is, I imagine, for tens or hundreds of thousands of other newspaper readers. There are some satisfactions, however, to be derived from the study of contemporary comic strips that all readers of newspapers may not enjoy. Although this modern mythology has a pleasantly static side, it is also (like the mythology of the ancients) in a process of continual evolution. Watch closely and you will notice how considerations of editorial policy affect the development of certain characters! During the course of one of those solemn conferences with which every employee of an advertising agency or denizen of a newspaper office is unhappily familiar, it seems to have been decided, for example, that such and such a character—Belinda or Jane—needs, in the interests of the public, to be taken down a peg. She is over the readers' heads—not democratic enough—insufficiently sexy. And thus there occurred a moment when Jane began to unveil herself—at first with a kind of delicate deliberation, worthy of an actress on the American vaudeville stage, then with a desperate haste and speed, becoming steadily more immodest as the weeks went by. Soon there was hardly a feature of her body that we had not examined: she hopped in and out of her bath with lightning boldness. Both of her breasts were rarely concealed at the same time. . . .

Apart from the editor's policy, there is the question of the artist's nerves. The invention and maintenance of a comic strip character is evidently an arduous task: and often, to judge by internal evidence, the draughtsman's sanity seems on the verge of breaking down. I remember, for example, one artist who, no doubt through sheer over-exertion of his creative faculty, worked himself into such a desperate nervous chaos that, like a sleeper half-awakened trying to control his dreams, he got his entire caste into a system of subterranean passages beneath an ancient manor house (where they were joined by a number of family spectres) but proved quite incapable of getting them out again. On Monday, the whole company would be in tangled flight across the page from left to right; on Tuesday he would repeat the action but reverse the direction. I was not surprised when the nightmare procession was suddenly cut short and the strip suspended until the artist had recovered his second wind. After a period of rest, he was able to resume work—but it was with a simpler story.

Our English comic strips, nevertheless, are poor stuff if we compare them with their magnificent American prototypes. Popeye still outshines all British competitors; and, though Segar, his original draughtsman, is now dead, the one-eyed pugilist and his lean exacting sweetheart, his parasite the pompous esurient Wimpy, and the whole picturesque assemblages of Jeeps and Goons, go jerking on through the imagination of the modern public. Jeeps, it will be remembered, consume orchids, possess mysterious electro-magnetic qualities and have an infallible knack of foretelling the future; while Goons resemble one of the queerer Eastern races described by Herodotus. Ruthless business men hunt them for their precious skins: but why—perhaps because I have missed some elucidatory instalment—I have not yet quite discovered. . . . In fantasy, as in vitality, the Americans beat us. No adult, it is true, will regret the non-appearance on this side of the Atlantic of that loathsome creation, little Orphan Annie, companioned by her equally disgusting dog—or L'il Abner, the towsled Kentucky hero—or Flash Gordon, whose only obvious merit is a hatred of totalitarian Governments. The absence of Krazy Kat, on the other hand, cannot be sufficiently lamented. Not many agreeable traits are related of Mr. William Randolph Hearst; but his sponsorship of Krazy Kat is certainly one of them. For this particular strip (which is featured every afternoon in the New York *World-Telegram*) fulfils all the conditions of the perfect comic sequence. It is simple but subtle, dramatic but not obtrusive. It has its own atmosphere, its own idiosyncratic language and takes place in surroundings peculiar to itself. Both the imaginary landscape of the moon and the mountains of New Mexico seem to have entered into the composition of that desert world where Krazy Kat sits meditatively on a fossil log, his eyes focused very often on a single brickbat, or leans against a lost lamp-post in the heart of the wilderness, environed by rocky shapes that would appeal to Salvador Dali. The author of this strip is an instinctive surrealist. Better still, he has the ingenuity of the natural myth-maker. It is among such images, beneath drifts of decaying wood-pulp, that future folk-lorists will discover the real mythology of the age we live in.

PETER QUENNELL

THE MOVIES

"Our Town," at the London Pavilion

Our Town is a film in a hundred. I haven't seen Thornton Wilder's play from which it is taken, but if it is anything like the film its author has advanced quite a step since *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. He still holds on to a *mystique* of time-sliding and death (this forms an interesting though not altogether successful part of the film), but here his interest in people has shifted from historical coach-fulls to the inhabitants of an American small town. In *Our Town* he emerges as a skilled Mass-Observer, with more than a touch of Priestley (the Priestley of the plays). How much this good-natured scrutiny, which makes the film seem fresh as paint, owes to Mr. Wilder and how much to the director, Sam Woods, I don't, of course, know.

The experiments come off surprisingly well. Guitry has already given us a narrator (in *Remontons les Champs Elysées* and *Roman d'un Tricheur*), but the device with him was egocentric. The narrator here, in the person of the local chemist, steps up to a gate to tell us facts about his town, to point out a distant train dead on time, to conjure up scenes in the past and present of his neighbours. This slipping in and out from direct address to the lives of several families is very skilfully managed. But it is the alertness of eye, the quickened interest in ourselves, the spectators, that will surprise many a cinema-goer for whom films have come to represent a waterfall of dreams. *Our Town* succeeds in drawing out of common lives and surroundings an emphasis and texture of their own. Because the eye is not dazzled by star-charm or predisposed to the pattern of a story, one finds oneself taking in, almost for the first time, everything that comes within the frame-work of the screen. A door opens into a kitchen in the early morning and, while the milkman ladles out a measure, we absorb quickly every detail in the room, from the woman standing back to us at the stove to the lace curtains, the staircase, the cat threading its way through legs and table legs. The film is full of such unexpected glimpses into houses, a schoolboy sitting at a window doing his homework, a little girl at breakfast spooning up with glum determination; and because all the characters appear to us at the moments when they are least prepared, their simple stories affect us with their authenticity. We get to know them off-guard, swiftly, accidentally. A boy and a girl grow up together, fall in love, marry and have children; the organist, a despondent sensitive, hangs himself in a fit of drunkenness; the doctor's wife, after twenty years of grind, has dreams of going to "Paris, France"; others gossip in the shade of sunny days and go to their graves. These lives shape their own patterns while we drink in the movement and configuration of "our town." The particular story that gradually comes out of this criss-cross—the marriage of the boy and girl—ends with a rather swamping effect. The girl, ill with her second childbirth, has visions of death and of a return to moments in her past life; here the experimental nature of the whole film becomes too obtrusive, and the moral—that simple happiness should be enjoyed more consciously while it lasts—seems doubtful. It is an ambitious and in its way rather moving end; more Wilder, perhaps, than Sam Woods. Some climax was needed, and theoretically perhaps this will do, though in practice it has fallen a little short.

Two things remain to be said. The acting of everyone is for once screen acting, intimate and naturalistic, and not a mere showing up to ancient lights. William Holden and Martha Scott (as the lovers), Guy Kibbee, Frank Craven, Thomas Mitchell, Beulah Bondi, Fay Bainter—I don't see how any of these could have improved on their performances. Secondly, if, despite its faults, this very original and intelligent film does not come to you as an experience, it may have the opposite effect of sending you fast asleep. A fat man behind me lay back and snored; not even a whispered "It's time to get up" could silence him. In these Blitz days, a film that will rivet one section of the audience and put the others happily to bed is rare indeed.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, November 30th—
Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, with Moiseiwitsch, Queen's Hall, 2.30.

SUNDAY, December 1st—
Prof. G. W. Keeton: "The American Constitution," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, December 2nd—
Anglo-Refugee Youth Centre Christmas Week in aid of young refugees interned and free. Full particulars from 24 Clifton Gardens, W.9. CUN. 2838.
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. M. Camille Huysman: "Belgium Under the Nazi Heel," 12 Gt. Newport St., 1.

TUESDAY, December 3rd—
R. M. Titmuss: "The Casualties of Environment," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, 1.
J. D. Bernal: "The Physics of Air Raids," Royal Institution, 2.30.
Prof. P. Kahle: "Islam and Far East in the Times of the Mughal Rulers," Warburg Inst., 2.30.

WEDNESDAY, December 4th—
M. Ignace Legramd: "Les Lettres en France au XVIIe siècle," Institut Français, 3.

THURSDAY, December 5th—
Anthony Blunt: "Poussin and his Patrons," Courtauld Institute of Art, 1.15.

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Correspondence

BEHIND BARBED WIRE

SIR,—Whilst admiring the firm stand against indiscriminate internment of "enemy aliens" adopted by your journal, may I criticise one idea put forward editorially in your issue of November 23rd? You argue that those internees—the great majority—who are neither Nazi sympathisers nor political enemies of the Nazis, but simply victims of "racial" intolerance, should be formed into a self-governing family colony in a "spacious region . . . within which they may walk about and lead normal lives as free men," and you select the Isle of Man as the "obvious place" for such a colony. A week before Mr. Brailsford was developing the same theme in *Reynolds News*, on the grounds that it is pointless to bring refugees back to London to face bombing.

Certainly it is useless simply to release all the innocent refugees and then to leave them penniless and jobless. Certainly everything should be done to promote work schemes for refugees, especially for group employment on co-operative lines. I have outlined some of the possibilities in this respect in my Penguin Special on the *Internment of Aliens*, to which your article refers. But I firmly believe that group employment is no solution for the majority of refugees. Their problem can only be solved by restoring the position of November, 1939, to May, 1940, when they were free to enter the labour market as individuals, and when in fact nearly 20,000 were absorbed into employment.

This position can only be restored by restoring to "enemy alien" refugees their freedom to live and move about the country as they please, subject only to such commonsense restrictions as are imposed on all of us. This implies release of the innocent to play their part in the common fate of all of us in Britain.

Precisely because the injustice of indiscriminate internment has occurred, with considerable damage to Britain's good name, it is necessary to insist on the release of *all* the innocent. There have been too many compromises in this matter. We demanded improvements in the internment camps when we should have been challenging imprisonment without trial; we demanded the release of the "important," the "keymen," the "valuable" and the "useful," when we should have insisted on the release of the innocent. Having persuaded the Home Office to recognise groups of "useful" internees who may be released, as the Nazis recognise "economically valuable Jews" who are exempt from repressive legislation, are we now to set up yet another cry—a family settlement in the Isle of Man!—to justify the official refusal to admit what the most elementary democratic solidarity demands: that no man, whether British or "alien," shall be imprisoned without trial because a Whitehall bureaucrat dislikes his name, his language or the country he was born in?

A number of Conservative backbenchers have brought shame upon themselves by denouncing in Parliament the alleged "luxurious idleness" in which "enemy aliens" interned in the Isle of Man were being maintained. How much more widespread would this senseless prejudice become if the story got around that German and Austrian refugees, too cowardly to take their chances of being bombed along with the rest of us, were being assisted to form a colony of their own out of harm's reach in the Isle of Man—especially in heavily bombed areas where people have no cause for satisfaction with the shabby way they are being treated when *they* become refugees. Far better release them all and encourage them once again to become what, through the fortunes of war, they were becoming—a part of the British community.

FRANÇOIS LAFITTE
31 Broadhurst Gardens,
Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex.

REPRISALS

SIR,—In his "A London Diary" "Critic" reports Tom Harrisson as having said that the people in Coventry do not want reprisals, and adds that "people who have been bombed do not want a similar misery for others."

Both "Critic" and Tom Harrisson have first-hand experience of being bombed; I have not. But neither a dozen Tom Harrissons nor many more "Critics" will ever induce me to believe that a desire to spare the Germans the same misery is a general reaction to being bombed. It is contrary

to one's first and final knowledge of human nature, and it is contrary to the law of the preservation of the species. Here is no question of tactics, or the wisdom or unwisdom of taking reprisals—it is purely a matter of the mass of the people not happening to be Oriental philosophers or inveterate Masochists.

I believe, too, that the natural desire to "give the Germans what they give us" is sound in the political, military and psychological sense. It is not at all a question of mere revenge—it is rather a question of an offence against society being followed by inevitable retribution on the heads of the offenders; we would do well to study the function of pain in the physiological field.

It is necessary, but not alone sufficient, to destroy German arms; that will do precisely nothing towards curing the German nation of its love of militarism. What they have never understood—because they have never experienced it—is the effect of militarism. The single military defeat of the last war merely destroyed their faith in the efficiency of that particular machine. Had the German people as many memorials of the meaning of a "war of frightfulness" as the Belgian or the French—their appetite for another war would have required considerably more whetting than even Herr Hitler could provide.

If then, by a set policy, we are going to assist the German people in their belief that they can be led by men who make barbaric assaults on other nations without hurt to themselves, they will emerge from defeat believing that it was once again the machine that somehow failed, and that next time its efficiency must be even more ruthlessly developed.

Gordon House, ARNOLD HYDE
Clayton Bridge,
Manchester, 10.

SIR,—Many citizens of Coventry who have endured the full horror of an intense aerial bombardment would wish to dispute statements made in the *Daily Express* to the effect that all the people of Coventry expressed the opinion that they wished to bomb, and bomb harder, the peoples of Germany.

This is certainly not the view of *all* or even the majority of the people of Coventry. The general feeling is, we think, that of horror, and a desire that no other peoples shall suffer as they have done. Our impression is that most people feel the hopelessness of bombing the working classes of Germany and very little satisfaction is attained by hearing that Hamburg is suffering in the same way as Coventry has suffered.

MARGARET M. EVANS
ARTHUR JONES
EVELYN J. A. EVANS
J. D. DUGUND
N. M. CAINE
J. R. SIDGWICK

"Hollycroft," Fife Road, Coventry.

THE EXECUTIONS IN SPAIN

SIR,—As your readers are probably aware, the Vichy Government is handing over all the Spanish refugees in France to the Falangist Government. On their arrival in Spain they are sorted: anyone who has in any way distinguished himself on the Republican side is tried for rebellion against France and executed. The remainder are either shot without trial or sent to concentration camps.

Two weeks ago Luis Companys, who for nearly five years was President of the Catalan Generalidad, was executed and with him Rivas Cherif, the brother-in-law of Azaña, Montilla, one of his close personal friends, Salvador Carreras, Francisco Cruz Salido and Julian Zugazagoitia—all of them liberal Republicans and about as far to the Left, if that word still has any meaning, as Lord Baldwin. Now a second batch of trials is announced—Nicolau d'Olwer, a former Republican Minister and Governor of the Bank of Spain, Largo Caballero and a number of Socialist deputies, among them Pascual Tomás and Rodolfo Llopis. In short, a new terror is beginning. The executions which have gone on day by day and week by week since July, 1936, just as they seemed to be dying down have received a fresh impetus from the acquisition of the half a million refugees repatriated from France.

There are no limits to the bloodthirstiness of the Falangist regime just as there are no limits to that of Stalin or of Hitler, but in this case the British Government is surely in a position to apply a little pressure. Our fleet commands the Spanish life-line, and though it is also true that Spain is a potential menace to us, the desire of every Spaniard who does not wish to see his country swallowed by Germany must be to keep out of the war. For such is the economic prostration of Spain under the present regime that she could not enter as an ally of the Nazis without being taken over and run by them as a colony. This offers a hope that, if Sir Samuel Hoare uses his influence at Madrid, many sentences of death might be commuted to sentences of imprisonment.

I do not know whether there still exist friends of Nationalist Spain in this country apart from those who are also secret admirers of Hitler, Mussolini and Laval. But if there are, may I appeal to them to point out to their friends that in the long run there are only two alternatives for the Spanish Government: either it must invite Hitler to march in as Godoy invited Napoleon, or it must make some effort to behave in a civilised and Christian manner. And by "Christian" I mean the Christianity of the great Spanish doctors of the Church of the sixteenth century, not that of the notorious Duke of Alba or of Torquemada. GERALD BRENAN

Bell Court,
Aldbourne, Marlborough.

VENEREAL DISEASE

SIR,—Judging by the views expressed in the letter signed "M.B., B.Ch.," there is now a growing demand from certain types of officers in the Forces for the provision of officially recognised brothels, namely, to provide the men with women to be used to relieve themselves from the tension of the sexual impulse. The women concerned will thus be regarded and treated just as if they were "public conveniences," and the sole object of pressing for these recognised brothels is as a supposed means of reducing venereal infection.

But how can any doctor, who is a genuine expert venereologist and also one who studies this problem from the statistical and administrative aspect, uphold this totally unreliable point of view that "tolerated brothels" help to reduce venereal disease? I am not a doctor but, in my official capacity, for 27 years I have dealt with venereal disease problems and studied it medically, socially and statistically over the world and with personal visits to Syria, Turkey, Palestine and almost all over Europe, and there is no reliable evidence anywhere that the recognised brothels, plus the regular medical examination of the women, plus required provision of disinfectants and irrigation in the rooms for the use of the man after intercourse, is of the slightest value in its actual effect in regard to the ratio of venereal disease.

It was part of my job to visit France about this problem in February of this year, and I had interviews with the leading venereologists in the French Ministry of Health and have copies of their own records of the futility of the brothel system, in the Paris and Seine areas, in preventing V.D. And now let me quote some figures just after the last war, when our troops were occupying the Rhine area. Here they are:

Cases of venereal infection:
Ratio per 1,000 men

On the Rhine (with the brothels)			
(Year)	1920	1921	1922
	188	212	213 per 1,000
At home (without brothels)—			
(Year)	1920	1921	1922
	48	40	33 per 1,000

And when our Forces were in France this year this Association demanded that the brothels there should be put "out of bounds." But the War Office would not act on those lines, and here is an actual private report from a military V.D. Hospital (May, 1940):

> In the course of conversation with many men suffering from V.D. each has admitted visiting a brothel. Each understood the women were examined and therefore safe. . . . Often a man would add: "If only they would put these places out of bounds we should not be here nor have made such an ugly scar in a hitherto happy married life."

If any of your readers would like detailed information on this subject this Association will gladly send them papers on application, free of charge. ALISON NEILANS (General Secretary)

The Association for
Moral and Social Hygiene,
Livingstone House, Broadway,
Westminster, London, S.W.1.

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With a Critical Foreword by GEORGE GIBSON, President of the T.U.C. General Council

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ROUTLEDGE KEGAN PAUL

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE English are not a nation of good story-tellers. Listen on a bus, in the train, in the pubs, cafés and sitting-rooms; it is rare to hear a story well told, neighbours vividly described, dialogue dramatically reported. Go to Wales, Ireland, the Steppes, and every sentence spoken sounds like the opening line of a tale. We lack the naivety or the detachment which turns ourselves or our friends into a living folklore or newspaper. Middle-class life is not to blame entirely, for the same condition is found among workers. Possibly we had that naivety before the Reformation, but I fancy that the general attitude to our own lives has always been ruminative, sentimental and moralistic. We have little experimental curiosity about our life stories, despite our tobacco-clouded introspections and those sudden gulfs of insight, which occur chiefly—unless I misread W. H. Auden—as we lean over the wash-basin. Worry about events and people, and not the events and people themselves is our instinctive interest. I think any short-story writer must have felt this when, eyes open and ears cocked, he snoops about in search of those Jamesian "germs, inveterately minute." The English simply present their lives baldly, are half-submerged by them anyway, and think it rather immoral to present them well.

A collection of Michael Zoshchenko's short stories, *The Woman Who Could Not Read* (Methuen, 5s.), translated with a pleasant air of naturalness by Elisaveta Fen, shows up our short-story writing badly. We have had many writers who could turn a triviality fancifully round their pen-nibs. But they leave it still a triviality. The Russian writers—and Zoshchenko is the heir of a tradition—are realistic about their trivialities; they make them not into fanciful elaborations, but into homely illustrations of our greater cares. A peasant urgently goes in search of a wife:

> Well, I harnessed the nag, put my new trousers on, washed my feet and drove off.

"Washed my feet"! A whole life springs up, a man who has been a mere mind suddenly has a body. It is the only description of him in the story, but its visual effect is enormous. It is Tchekov's trick of describing the moonlight by the glint on a broken bottle. But it is not chiefly in the detail of a story that the English short-story writer fails. He has no idea of the art of brevity. In fifteen hundred words Zoshchenko can do almost anything. The English writer of brief stories is limited over and over again either to mere whimsicality, or especially to the lyrical description of an emotional state, a piece of landscape. By this, of course, he gives voice to that meditative, ruminative romanticism of our natures. But we feel that the author, having no invention, has made the best of a bad job; he had no point of view about other people, because he had never got beyond that literary adolescence which has a point of view about itself only. Zoshchenko's stories have none of this poetical priggishness. Brief as they are, they are full of people and incident, frequently have "a plot" and they have also that suggestive quality, a hint dropped here and there, which opens up worlds for the mind to wander in a long time afterwards. And although his stories are written in conversational style, the talk is without those studied buttonholings or breezy non-intimacies of our conversational manner—what Mr. Cyril Connolly has called the "you-man" style. Zoshchenko may talk, for all one knows, as all Russians talk, and certainly as they often do in Tchekov; he talks like an ordinary man without the ordinary man's pomposity and self-consciousness; we recognise the talk, however, because it is like what we say, not indeed to each other, but to ourselves:

> The country air, they say, is very good for you. The air of pine forests, especially, is said to be wholesome for the lungs. So the doctors say. As to myself, I don't really know. I rather doubt it. . . . Though the country air may do you good in the end, you're sure to catch some infection on the way there.

It is easy to overrate—and also underrate—Zoshchenko's sketches. Their subjects are familiar: the farces of the housing situation in Moscow, the digs at a State which makes five-year plans but can't produce electric-light meters, the eternal Russian foolery at the expense of bureaucrats. Some readers are surprised that Zoshchenko's cynicism and satire are permitted and widely enjoyed in Russia. Miss Fen, the translator, says that the greater and better part of his work belongs to the collectivisation period, when there was more freedom for writers than there is now. To-day (she says) he is obliged to add cautions and morals to his stories. Certainly the title story, which describes how a woman decided to learn to read and write—and thereby liquidate national illiteracy—because she discovered a perfumed letter in her husband's coat, looks as if it had been tampered with and neutralised. There is no means of knowing how Zoshchenko is affected; but English short-story writers have their own difficulties, too, with the unofficial censorship of the magazines. Direct political censorship is probably less harmful to imaginative writers than the business man's indirect censorship. For censors are usually stupid or venal. They strain at gnats and swallow camels: the wise writer soon learns to give them gnats to strain at. Censorship, after its first stone-walling phase has passed, may be a stimulus. It encourages subtlety. A hint, an insinuation, the click of the tongue in the cheek, are often more effective in a story than the sullen verbosity of free protest. I assume in reading Zoshchenko's stories that the Soviet censor was wise enough to let well alone when he discovered that Zoshchenko was writing on what must be a major spiritual problem in Russia: the nostalgia for personal life. But whether the censor was indulgent, subversive, officially wily or blind, Zoshchenko is the gainer by the ever possible threat. He slips his theme across nonchalantly by pretending to be silly, a harmless, clever crank or buffoon, who always skids on the banana-skin or, by advocating with exaggeration the correct point of view:

> To have your own private flat is, no doubt, a sign of petty bourgeois mentality.
>
> It is better to live as one large friendly communal family than to shut yourself inside your domestic fortifications.
>
> You ought to live in communal flats. There everything is public. There's always someone to talk to, to ask advice from. And to have a fight with, too, if you feel inclined.

Zoshchenko gets away with anything by farcical advocacy, and by presenting himself as the idiotic enthusiast.

It is interesting to look at the Zoshchenko technique in what I think is the best story in the book, the one entitled *A Mistake*, which was published in this paper some time ago. This is a story which lasts in the mind because it lives on many levels and is related to a whole world of fundamental ideas; yet it is a ridiculous, cruel story. The scene is in a crowded train travelling into the country. I have already quoted the opening passage about country air, and that is all the description there is in the tale. There is an old woman with a basket. She is merely "any ordinary old woman." She is followed by a bullying man described in one line as "somewhat of a dandy, quite smartly dressed and with a little moustache." The central situation is established at once. The man is cursing the woman, the passengers are indignant with him. Because he is attacking a woman? No. Zoshchenko chooses the public, the social side of our nature, and it is this that gives both novelty and individuality to his people. They are indignant because he is attacking "an old domestic worker . . . humiliating her proletarian dignity." One of the passengers—"a rather excitable fellow," is all we are told—begins to lead the protest. He is so furious, he grabs the dandy by the coat. Climax. Then the anti-climax: the dandy reveals the old lady is not "an old domestic worker," she is his mother. The excitable fellow backs away, apologetically—and this is good observation—he does not apologise fully until he has justified himself:

> You ought to have declared this as soon as you got in. Otherwise how the devil are we to know. She carries no label on her.

Then everyone apologises. It was only the dandy's mother. This is the-collapse-of-old-gentleman phase in the *Punch* anecdotes, but the story is more than that. There the incident could have ended, starkly. But Zoshchenko never depends mechanically on merely trick endings and stings-in-the-tail. He ends with character, not incident, a character which has developed and conveyed the whole incident to an even more sardonic plane of satire: blowing himself up, the dandy becomes sarcastic:

> As to the Labour Code regulations, p'rhaps I know them better than anyone else here. P'rhaps I am an old revolutionary who's been living in Leningrad since 1917. . . .

The story begins in one mood, a lackadaisical one, and grows into a totally different one quite naturally. That seems to me one of the signs of mastery in a short story.

It is easy to trace Zoshchenko's ancestry of satirical extravagance and farce in Russian literature. Every Russian writer has written something funny about teeth and preposterous about Government officials from Gogol onwards. Outside Russia, Zoshchenko seems to have affinities with the American, Wm. Saroyan, who, in the same disarming way, has picked up the man in the street and treated him naively, farcically, mystically. He and Zoshchenko are a pair of innocent hopefuls, a Laurel and Hardy, who can't stop talking. Zoshchenko, of course, is never mystical. His optimism comes in mad moments, as in the story where he goes off on a disastrous bicycle ride and is arrested. Saroyan and Zoshchenko are the two sides of the medal of writing about the people; Zoshchenko the harder, more ingenious, older lag. Saroyan urges the ordinary man into the earthly paradise with the humility of faith in man; Zoshchenko urges him on with the comic staggers of perpetual over-reaching. The same zest for the future is in both.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Betrayal of Christ by the Churches.

By J. MIDDLETON MURRY. *Dakers.* 5s.

People frequently write books and send letters to the *Times* discussing the meaning of Christianity and what should be done to revive it. To me these never seem the real questions. The central teaching of the New Testament is surely quite unambiguous. The question that follows after re-reading it is whether one is prepared to accept the teaching and give up everything for Christ's sake. I have met a few people, very few, who were in this sense Christians. I agree fully with Middleton Murry in his able book, that the Church does not teach Christianity. "It knows its function, which is to be a good wife to the State. Like a good wife it never advises and never criticises, and when there is a row it always stands up for its husband. And it insists on one thing, as far as it may, that the husband shall keep out of the kitchen." Which does not mean that much that is socially valuable is not taught in the churches or that many

people who are not in the least followers of Christ, are not the better for going to church. Thousands of good men and excellent citizens who call themselves Christians are obviously nothing of the sort. They have decided, consciously or more often unconsciously, that Christianity is too hard or too impracticable a religion. Personally I was brought up in the Christian faith, and because I learnt what Christianity is I know now that I am not a Christian. Rather I am a follower of Socrates and a backslider at that. It is well, at any rate, to find out what one's real faith is. Otherwise one may discover, like Ferrovius in Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* that when the test comes in the arena one is after all a follower of Mars or Mammon or some other deity, and it may then be too late to serve one's real God effectively.

Christianity first grew among slave and subject peoples. As Mr. Murry points out, it is the religion of people who are prepared to suffer martyrdom, not to inflict it. The only Christian victory is to persuade one's enemy; if one decides that one cannot persuade him and that one is not willing to forgive him up to seventy-times seven; if failing to overcome evil by good or, despairing of making the attempt, one decides not to turn the cheek but to choose good bombing targets and bomb them hard; if instead of praying for those who dispitefully use you, you pray, on the contrary, for victory, then your course may be right on national or rational or liberal or socialist or other principles, but it cannot be right on Christian principles. It is because every Bishop and priest knows in his heart that all our society and especially our wars are contradictions of Christianity that clerical pronouncements are so embarrassed and so little heeded. We listen to Archbishops as we listen to politicians and agree or disagree on political grounds. When they try to relate what they say to the teaching of Christ we blush and turn off the radio.

Mr. Middleton Murry is a churchman who finds himself blushing continually for the Church. He blushes, for instance (and explains very convincingly why he blushes) when he analyses a speech in which Lord Halifax, after deploring the ghastly miseducation of German youth, forgets the part that he and other Conservative M.P.s who harried Mr. Lloyd George in 1919 to make a sterner peace, played in educating the younger generation of Germans. Mr. Murry brings both knowledge and acumen to an historical sketch of the development of the Church; he sees its decay in its "steadily increasing preoccupation with preserving its own existence as an institution"; he observes that instead of championing the poor, its concern is with the interests of property; it has had nothing to say about the vast social problems that arise from the breakdown of communal life, "the de-personalisation of social relations which is inevitable in an industrial civilisation." All this has been said often; seldom as well as Mr. Murry says it. He also hopes for a Christian revival—and he is better entitled to talk about it than most churchmen because he understands—or so it seems to me—what the teaching of Christ implies. "Jesus preached his good tidings against the background of an imminent ending of the world. Under the shadow of such an expectation—or nearer to it than the world has been since Jesus lived and died, we stand to-day. There is good reason why the gospel of Jesus should speak more plainly to our hearts and minds."

What does Mr. Murry propose? The central point of the gospel of Christ is the kingdom of God. To believe, as so many Protestants believed in the 19th century, that the kingdom of God would be automatically realised on earth by the march of progress, was obviously, as Mr. Murry says, an "aberration." Such a doctrine has

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MAKE IT A GIN and BRIT

nothing Christian about it. The two other views were that of the Catholic Church which held that "the kingdom of God was already realised in the Church itself," and the Protestant attitude that the Kingdom of God "had no relation to existence in this world." Neither of these views solve the problem of how to relate the Christian gospel to the needs of the 20th century. The need, as Mr. Murry sees it, is for those who are believers in the eternal and revivifying power of the gospel to preach the power of love; to come together as a Church or true community of people who intend to follow Christ whatever happens and expect, not the immediate conversion of the world, but the suffering and in the long run the power which comes from sacrifice. "Now with the impotence of the Christian Church manifest before our eyes, and with our new historical knowledge of the causes of its rise, its triumph, its decline and its fall, we see that the work has to be done all over again. It may have to be done again and again and again, world without end. That does not matter. We at least know that it is the only thing worth doing; and that only in trying to do it, do our lives have meaning. The Christian Church has finally abandoned its task of seeking to regenerate the world by love. We must take it up ourselves. And we must begin at the beginning."

The beginning? Mr. Murry's conclusion, I think, is correct. The Christian in this situation will find himself in a small group with like-minded persons building, as early Christians built, a Church which repudiates the violence and magnificence of the totalitarian world around them and undertakes such social service as our present society will accept from unworldly men who do not fight but insist, whatever the dangers to themselves and others, in regarding men impartially as children of one Father. Possibly in this way the religion of Christ will survive as it did during that earlier period of spiritual and physical catastrophe which we call the Dark Ages.

KINGSLEY MARTIN.

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Cousin Honoré. By STORM JAMESON. *Cassell.* 8s.

Shoal Water. By DORNFORD YATES. *Ward Lock.* 7s. 6d.

Now that Europe may have been physically lost to one for many years, it is with an unfamiliar and very special greediness that one welcomes those contemporary novels in which careful and affectionate evocations of Europe are to be found. Herr Mann draws on the past, in Weimar; and Miss Jameson on the present, in Alsace. The former novel is a magnificent imaginative reconstruction of one of the great key positions, so to say, in the map of modern culture; the latter is a sober, able and loving study of a marvellously rich countryside, and of city versus country ambitions. It would only be a disservice to Miss Jameson if I were to give the impression of weighing both books in the same scales. Herr Mann's powers are not easily matched. But both books, for the reason already given, make very sour-sweet, nostalgic reading to-day. The meal by the roadside, the long wooden table, the summer evening, the conversation free from small hopes and huge fears—will it ever come again?

When Goethe wrote *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* (a book which for years made it unthinkable for any clever young man in Europe to claim a happy love-affair) he was twenty-three. The heroine, Lotte, had an original in Charlotte Buff, of Wetzlar, who married a man called Kestner. As Mrs. Lowe-Porter says, in her "Translator's Preface":

> Goethe, Kestner and Lotte spent an idyllic summer, Goethe falling in love first with the mutual love of his friends, then with Lotte herself, lastly and most of all with his own emotions as poet and lover.

Indeed, it was another man, Jerusalem, who was chiefly affected by Lotte's marriage, and shot himself. But it was Goethe who appropriated all of their emotions to himself, and produced *Werther*. Herr Mann has taken, as the basis of his book, Lotte's one subsequent meeting with Goethe (a historical fact) forty-four years later. Lotte has become a widow, Frau Councillor Charlotte; she has given birth to eleven children, one of whom, a daughter, accompanies her to Weimar.

> She (Charlotte) knew to what curiosity—in the ladies probably tinged with malice—she was exposing herself; and met it with a dignity in any case forced upon her by the necessity to check the nodding tendency of her head, now much aggravated by all the circumstances . . . she stood there a quaint and dainty little figure, in her ankle-length flowing white frock, caught up into folds at the bosom with an agraffe and garnished with pink bows; perching on tight little black button boots with heels. The ash-grey hair stood up above a fair, unwrinkled brow; the face was irretrievably elderly, with sunken cheeks on either side; a well-formed, rather roguishly smiling mouth; the small nose had a naive, red tinge . . .

On arriving in Weimar, Charlotte causes an unprecedented commotion. It was in a Europe in which it had not yet become fashionable to be stupid; in a town where the "great man" was really great, and the arrival of the heroine that first made him famous caused crowds outside the hotel. The book begins with the arrival of visitor after visitor. First, the literary head-waiter nearly takes leave of his senses; next, an Irish lady; then, in succession, Dr. Riemer, Goethe's chief secretary, Adele Schopenhauer, the modernist bluestocking, and August Goethe, the son. They describe Goethe in relation to themselves, pouring out their feelings to the illustrious newcomer as to a confessor, in flowery, slightly provincial language, and gradually there crystallises a portrait such as could only be achieved by someone who is at once a notable Goethe scholar, and a creative novelist of the first magnitude. It permanently influences the reader's conceptions of Goethe. The vanities, and prejudices, for example, are fascinatingly presented: his terror of funerals; his Toryism. Goethe's opinion of the Germans is brought out in a chapter during which Herr Mann allows his hero to soliloquise:

> Great in understanding and in love, mediating spirits—for mediation is of the spirit too—so should Germans be, and such their destiny. Not this pig-headed craving to be a unique nation, this national narcissism that wants to make its own stupidity a pattern and power over the rest of the world! Unhappy folk! They will end in a smash. Do not understand themselves, that makes the rest of the world laugh at them, at first; but after a while the world hates them for it, and that is dangerous. Fate will smite them for betraying themselves and not wanting to be what in fact they are. She will scatter them over the earth, like the Jews, and justly. For their best always lived in exile among them; and in exile only, in dispersion, will they develop all the good there is in them for the healing of the nations, and become the salt of the earth . . .

Goethe's passion for almost every branch of knowledge is not forgotten, and that giant instinct which sometimes replaced scientific training. He had almost forgotten Charlotte. She says of herself, to Riemer:

> "A single heroine is enough for one episode—but there have been many episodes; people say there still are. It is a sort of dance I have joined—"
>
> "An immortal dance," supplemented Riemer.

The tremendous dinner-party is not very much of a success for Charlotte. But at the very end of the book, when Goethe accompanies her back from the theatre, the book rounds into a whole, and both Charlotte and the reader are satisfied.

Thanks to Joanna

We appealed to Joanna. Perhaps she could give us the best answer to the question "Why should men dress their best in wartime?"

Joanna is young, and with avuncular pride we declare she is very charming. She didn't begin to take the war seriously until last week when her hairdresser was called up.

Laying down "Don't, Mr. Disraeli," over which she had been audibly chuckling, Joanna repeated our question: "Why should men dress their best in wartime?" answering, "Well, why shouldn't they? If young men still in civilians don't dress their best they'll stand a poor chance against the uniforms!"

This wasn't quite what Goss wanted, but it was Joanna. Maybe she wasn't far wrong. Any woman will agree that to look one's best is to feel one's best.

Most men have seldom if ever given the question much thought. If they did we suspect that they would have to admit that the female instinct is once again right.

In any case the war is a feeble excuse for shabbiness. There is a reasonable midway between losing all interest in one's appearance under war conditions and being wildly extravagant.

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A CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR THE INTELLIGENT

NO robins in this Christmas number. No pictures of Santa Claus being shot down by Anti-Aircraft. No waits being mistaken for the all-clear. And yet, there may be people who really want a magazine to *read* this Christmas, and if they do they will certainly find it in the Christmas number of World Review.

Not that this Christmas number isn't bright and amusing. How could Max Beerbohm write on the Top Hat without being as polished and as sparkling as his subject? Could Diana Morgan (who wrote many of the Gate Revue numbers) write a special Revue for us without being witty? But enough! If you are the sort of person we think you are you need only glance at the contents panel—and World Review will be yours this Christmas.

Contents

Christmas 1914-1939, Sir John Squire; **Thinking Aloud . . .** Edward Hulton; **The Top Hat**, Sir Max Beerbohm; **The Third Time**, Alistair Cooke; **The Monroe Doctrine**; **Man of the Month: Bill Bullitt**, Noel Barber; **The Dutch East Indies: From Clausewitz to Hitler**, Capt. Liddell Hart; **World Revue: A Frolic in Colour**, Diana Morgan and Walter Trier; **The Ideal Woman**, James Laver; **Japan Drops the Mask**, H. J. Timperley; **Things of Everyday: The Candle**, George Edinger; **Pity the Poor Measle**, Professor J. B. S. Haldane; **I Was Interned**, S. J. Charoux; **Our Oldest Ally**, John Gaunt; **Are We Escapists?** Tom Harrisson; **The Truth About ENSA**, Basil Dean; **Iran, Iraq—and the Axis**, J. Wentworth Day; **Comic Strips**, Frank Dowling; **A Book of To-day: The Perfect Life**, Dermot Morrah; **A Book of Yesterday: The Diary of a Nobody**, Alan Jenkins; **The Bookshelf**; **Christmas Fifty Years Ago**; **Cross-Section.**

WORLD REVIEW

Christmas Number OUT NOW

ONE SHILLING

Mrs. Lowe-Porter has always maintained such a high level as a translator that the smallest lapses have a trick of standing out over-boldly. For instance :

> Good, good, you are in the right of it, one needs to watch out.

This combines an archaism and an Americanism ; they do not marry happily. Also, at the opening of the soliloquy, Goethe makes a rather broad remark which has been primmed almost into incomprehensibility.

Cousin Honoré displays a very remarkable knowledge of the viticultural, social and political structure of France, and contains, considering that it was completed a week before the Collapse, some acute prophetic moments. The action takes place between 1918 and 1939, and, briefly, it is a story of vineyards for which an industry is enslaved, and then lost. The Burckheims have lived in their chateau, and still more in their vineyards, since the Middle Ages, and Honoré Burckheim sides with his land in the final and inevitable battle which has to be fought against his money. He owns an ironworks, but his lack of real interest in it results in his letting it slide out of his control into that of four other men ; two of them true friends, and two false. When he dies, he goes to spend his last moments with none of them, not even with his American wife, or his illegitimate daughter, but with his one tenant, Dietrich, a man who feels as he does, but whom he has teased and thwarted all his life.

Perhaps the stage is a little overcrowded—Honoré has two or three too many parasites for them all to be shown successful as entities—but the eager sensuousness with which the landscape, and Honoré's intuitive passion for it, is depicted, more than compensates.

There are some excellently conceived political quarrels in the book, heightened by geography. Alsace, when war threatens, has never been a very reassuring place : fertile and lovely as it is, it is also the broken heart of Europe. I cannot close without mentioning specifically one more personage, Henry Eschelmer, Honoré's bastard grandson. He becomes a Nazi agent, and is a minor masterpiece of characterisation. Volatile, weak, ruthless, shrewd, he is politically and morally correct to the last boast.

Shoal Water is a novel (I suppose) which I find very difficult indeed. It is like reading a study of the habits of some newly discovered tribe of aborigines, with a hitherto unknown behaviour-pattern. The language is not unlike English, yet strangely archaic and distorted, and apart from one aborigine's mating instinct, it is absolutely impossible to decide why anyone in the book acts as he does, unless it is pure ritual. The hero-aborigine has four names, Solon, Soleyne, Esau, and "The Thunderer," which he acquired at Oxford. The heroine has three names, Formosa, Katharine Scrope, and "my lady." Her father, Sir Valentine Scrope, is a blind giant "like a Viking" with "a pointed beard glowing with gray and gold." The giant lives in a miniature castle in France called Cardinal, next to the villages of Danders and Cruise. Formosa has a distasteful adventure with some neighbouring aborigines, the leader of whom Solon drowns by inches, and loses her memory. The tribe ends up in England at White Ladies, near the village of Brooch :

> . . . an immemorial manor. . . . Its charm was strong and gentle—and ministered to the mind. Gray, carved stone and winking lattices, time-honoured lawns and timber older than they, topiary work and flags and a park of blowing meadows, where cows were cropping the shadows of English oaks—

I'll give ten to one—ten White Ladies, made with Gordon's Gin, to one faded photograph of Tintagel—that Mr. Yates can crop more shadows in an hour than any cow, or novelist, in the whole of ye oldie Englande.

BRIAN HOWARD

GENIUS AND PERSECUTION

Let There be Sculpture. By JACOB EPSTEIN *Michael Joseph.* 18s.

This is Epstein's autobiography. He does not attempt to give an intimate picture of himself or his life (which is a good thing, as he is in no sense of the word a writer) but confines his book to his work. Each chapter represents a statue or group of statues, and the public's reception of them. Certain facts stand out. Epstein has violent persecution mania. This persecution mania (like all persecution mania) seems fairly justified. Much about Epstein's work is vulgar. But on the whole he is a very remarkable sculptor, easily the most outstanding of those now working in England and America, and the only one to have a greatness in conception as well as in execution which links him to the great sculptors of the past. Let us try to disentangle him a little.

Persecution mania. Epstein has obviously been persecuted; a natural aggressiveness and a talent for publicity have increased the persecution. There is no reason why a great artist should not have a talent for publicity and it is clear that his relation with the *Daily Mail, Daily Express,* and so on, is one of deep emotional understanding and dependence on both sides. If they didn't howl at him he would feel lonely; if they weren't shocked by him they would feel out of it. More serious is the opposition of the public to something as beautiful as Rima, or to the figures of Night and Day. There is also constant opposition from three other groups, the conservative Academician, the Catholic intelligentsia, and "Bloomsbury." It is the hostility of the latter than Epstein most resents. Here are five groups who have never liked Epstein, and said so, and that is quite enough to give any artist persecution mania, especially when the economics of sculpting are taken into consideration. Imagine how a poet would feel if he had to spend up to several hundred pounds on the paper for his poems: if he needed great physical strength to hold his fountain pen: if he had only a fortnight a year to read and sell them in after transplanting them at great expense from different parts of the country: if his subjects, when living people, were complaining or always getting drunk on the strength of their association with him: and if he couldn't write a few lines about the *Flight into Egypt* without being accused of blasphemy by the popular press, the bishops, the elder men of letters, and of mere exhibitionism by other poets who never wrote at all. And then having to cart away his two-ton poems in order to make room for some Mickey Mouse drawings. Such is the sculptor's life, without either the open-air serenity of the painter, or the pen and notebook adaptability of the writer, who can work in bed, and without any economic security—except that to be obtained by doing busts of generals before they are bowler-hatted upstairs, or by trying to please provincial museums. What muddles up Epstein's life so is the fact, which he does not bring out in his book enough, that quite seventy per cent. of the opposition to him is anti-Semitic. His artistic life has really been one long pogrom. This anti-Semitism is either quite ignorant, as in the reactions of the popular press and the philistine public, or informed, as in the case of the R.A.s, the Catholics and the highbrows. That is to say that these three groups feel (as I do myself) that there is something extremely alien to our English genius in Epstein's large sculptures, that they conflict with both the emotional values of the West, and with our dislike of mammoth contraptions of any kind. The scale is too large, the feeling too Assyrian. We have only to think of Maillol to realise how much we like Maillol for the opposite reasons. The West has successfully absorbed all forms of Mediterranean and also of Northern art. It still jibs at Oriental (except Chinese and Khmer) and to a lesser extent, at African. Epstein is a Polish Jew who has gone for his sources to what is most virile, colossal, mystical, and sensual in Jewish feeling or Eastern art. There is something about him of the Old Testament before the dons got to work on it. That he should shock people so much is in a sense a tribute to them, and to him. It proves that people still have a sense of what is out of keeping and disturbing to their national aesthetic, and that Epstein, for his part, has refused to water down his Oriental titanism to suit the requirements of the public among whom he lives. Once we admit this prejudice against his large work, it is easier to realise how good it is. *Adam,* for instance, seems magnificent, so does *Genesis,* the Wilde tomb, *Consummatum Est,* and *The Visitation.* The opposition of Bloomsbury is understandable because it is almost impossible for people of carefully formed taste to appreciate the first rate when it is vulgar, and because they represented an essentially classical outlook enlivened by a few naughtinesses. Roger Fry was "naughty" about African art, as a political liberal can be "naughty" about anarchism or Trotskyism, but he seems to have felt about Epstein as Bloomsbury felt about Lawrence, or surrealism. And besides, Epstein, like Lawrence, was not French.

The portrait-busts, the bronzes, and child-heads of Epstein are in another class. It is impossible to feel any Western European prejudices about them; many of them are masterpieces of their kind. *The Young Communist* is like 4th century Greek. The male portrait studies are bronze cylinders of pent-up emotion—the fire of Cunninghame-Graham, the pathos of Einstein and Dewey, the strength of Robeson, the shrewdness of Beaverbrook, the weary aristocratic malignance of the late Duke of Marlborough. But his women are finer still; to quibble about whether *Lydia,* or *May,* or the exquisitely sensual *Isobel* are works of art or things of beauty, when they are so obviously, like his heavenly child-busts, among the supreme achievements of sculpture of our century, is to be hopelessly blinkered. It is unfortunate that, again largely for economic reasons, Epstein's busts are usually of people like Rothermere, Beaverbrook, Shaw, and so on, whose faces posterity can give a pretty good guess at without demanding so permanent a reminder. I would like to see him commissioned to embronze the dozen or so really key figures of our generation. Also he ought to stop writing to the papers, stop "rising" so automatically at every red rag, stop re-printing long newspaper controversies, and make a vow to live the rest of his life entirely for his own enjoyment, at work in his studio.

CYRIL CONNOLLY.

VAUVENARGUES

Reflections and Maxims of Luc de Clapiers Marquis de Vauvenargues. Translated into English by F. G. STEVENS. *Oxford Press.* 7s. 6d.

Here is the perfect way for an Englishman to read Vauvenargues. The left-hand page has the text ; on the right, set to a line, is Mr. Stevens's translation. We can read from one to the other, holding on to meanings, catching a flavour and letting it spread. The page (destined finally, one supposes, for the World's Classics) is provided here with wide margins, which have many advantages. Compressed writing needs all the space a publisher can give it, or the writer's resonance may be lost ; the eye must *see* the maxim it is intent on, with emptiness all round. There is, too, the practical advantage

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that a fairly empty-looking page tempts the reader to mark and scribble for himself. Vertical strokes, exclamation and question, Yes and No, mark many pages of maxims in library books which must not be marked. This edition of Mr. Stevens's offers a further temptation. Who can read a book of this sort, pencil in hand, without the feeling that someone is looking over his shoulder while he reads? That what one notes will be noted in turn? Snobbery is a fine spur. It would hurt us to feel that any admonition of Vauvenargues first dawned on Mr. Stevens's side of the fence. So our agreement or disapproval appears (for all time) against the original, while we confine ourselves on the other page to shortcomings in the English translation. That translation, by the way, despite the problem of finding exact shades for such oft-recurring nouns as *esprit*, *sentiment*, and *opinion*, is on the whole accurate and easy.

Not all these satisfactions come from Vauvenargues himself, but then there are few writers who can be read without irrelevance. Vanvenargues travels light, too light for most weathers. And before we have gone very far with him, we hand over lunch-basket, coat, muffler, compass and walking-stick, until he has the Crusoe look of potterers like ourselves. Everyone who has journeyed at all in mountain country will have come across one of these light and intrepid travellers. He is there when one arrives; he welcomes one to the wine he is drinking; he knows all the paths and weather signs; he walks all day on three apricots and a lump of ice-cream in a thermos; it is he who, at the beginning of the climb, recommends us to go very slowly and to allow three steps as we breathe in and four as we breathe out; after a day in his company we find that while we have talked easily and a lot, he has said very little. Perhaps it comes out that most of the year he is an insurance-agent in a town; but the eleven months passed on doorsteps and in offices count for nothing against one morning in the Tatras.

Vauvenargues is such a creature of heights: rare, remote, helpful, mathematically rapt. I have read him before; I shall read him, I hope, again. But—each time he leaves me impressed and a little empty. Of those 700 maxims less than a quarter strike me as important in themselves or necessary to a scheme. Perhaps the only maxims one reads with pleasure are those which (in Utopia) one might have written oneself; the only truths, those of which we are already persuaded:

> What variety, what refreshment, and what interest would be found in books, if authors wrote only what they thought.

That is the sort of remark that inevitably draws me, though it has appeared in a hundred other places; a line could be drawn in literature between the writers who admit its implication and those who don't, and the first group is the more forward-looking of the two. "Les meilleurs auteurs parlent trop" reaches out, too, with a wider light on literature than the aphorist's slant, and I am glad to see that Mr. Green takes this sentence as meaning "Even the best authors say too much," and not "talk too much," though that also has a point.

But both these maxims I have quoted are, and have been for generations, in the air. They don't start or end with Vauvenargues. Now it is the privilege and misfortune of those who discover truths only to light up opinion for a little while; looking backwards they illuminate the murky and unselfconscious past; reaching ahead they have the doubtful satisfaction of knowing that their truths will become truisms and so cease to shine. This has happened, I believe, with Vauvenargues. His rigid honesty did not shrink from uttering what he believed to be true, even when it was boring; and time, as I have suggested, is a great manufacturer of bores. If he had generalised less and spoken less out of the upper air he might, paradoxically, have had a more lasting and energetic appeal. The truths that keep writing in currency are nearly always personal truths; Socrates is an exception, perhaps, but even on him there is the breath of Xantippe. Vauvenargues has no gnarled man, no undertow of bad dreams, no housewife or hovel. All, all is finely felt, modestly and nobly thought; and the effect on the reader is rather thinly inspiriting. I cannot read more than a page or two of him—well though he writes about society, pleasure, truth and lying, duty and the importance of the heart—without feeling, "Yes, but I should be enjoying this more than I do"—a fatal attitude towards any author and especially one inculcating honesty. Vauvenargues writes out of a disinterested heart—and how rare that is!—but his wisdom lacks a setting. All honour to a writer who compresses himself to a few hundred pages, but he must be there himself. And Vauvenargues almost isn't there. Soldiering, illness and a detachment flushed with feeling he knew, for example, intimately. But how little there is to show for it! "Oh, qu'il est difficile de se résoudre à mourrir!" is a good saying, but floating on the page alone as No. 700 of the maxims, it is far from being the profound cry it might have been. We can't guess the tone (stoically sad, perhaps) because Vauvenargues' is not a voice we learn to recognise instinctively. How inconspicuous, for example, would be the resolution "Être saint pour soi-méme" if it had not come from Baudelaire. Baudelaire we know, with whatever reservation; Vauvenargues remains a name in the void. And no amount of re-reading, I think, will help us over this difficulty.

Historically, he appears to us in company with two others: Rochefoucauld before, Joubert after. The first is grander, wittier, more cruel but in the end more penetrating. The second is a poet, pert as a squirrel, whose intuition flares as vividly as the day on which he wrote. Between them, a distinguished and rather pale figure, is Vauvenargues: midway in time, but not the centre-piece of the three.

G. W. STONIER

THE LOST YEARS

The Malady and the Vision. By T. R. FYVEL. *Secker and Warburg.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This is a moving and impressive book, even though its conclusion is a disappointing one. Mr. Fyvel has analysed with insight and delicacy the world as he has seen it between the two wars of our generation. He outlines the hopes with eloquence and the disillusion without concealment. Greed, privilege, intrigue, the ugly struggle for power, the brutality that goes with the struggle; he has seen all these in their naked ugliness. Alongside them, always with a sure hand, he draws a skilful picture of the men and their leaders, so small, and even pitiful, against the vast impersonal forces in which they are involved. He sees the tragedy of these years the more clearly, because he understands how often the right to hope seemed real, how sincere, if so limited, the leaders often were. The world he draws is a world in search of a faith and unable to find its principles. It is a world which protests in shame and anger against the very cruelty it finds itself driven to inflict. It is difficult to exaggerate the sombre effectiveness of these pages. Their merit is not merely the swift skill with which they paint a portrait of the lost generation, but also the power with which they make its tragic close seem its inevitable close. Whether it be Poland or the Middle East, France or the Soviet Union, Mr. Fyvel has the power to see the significant element in the design he wishes to compose. Now and again one may quarrel with his proportions; now and again there is an inaccuracy of detail which suggests that Mr. Fyvel is impatient with that slow-moving precision of scholarship which insists that accuracy of proportion is the outcome of patient exactitude of detail. But, all in all, as a panorama of the lost years, Mr. Fyvel has written the best book known to me in many a day.

Yet when he has caught the mood of those years, his power deserts him. The reason, I suspect, is the simple one that Mr. Fyvel's ability is that of psychological description and not of philosophic explanation. For when, with incisive power, he has described the malady, his sense of the vision halts because he has no guiding clue. What he gives us is a set of platitudes, that the world is one, that youth, revolting against age, has lost its moorings and accepted false gods, that we must have a democracy of nations, that we must proclaim the end of economic man. This summary, no doubt, does less than justice to the fervour of Mr. Fyvel's emphasis. But I do not think I do him an injustice if I say that, at the end, he can only plead, in half-despair, that unless the world adopts quickly a socialised liberalism, there is little for which to hope. He offers a four-point plan for the British Empire which begins with the announcement of equality for all nations; this at the moment when Nehru is in jail and the report on the North Rhodesian strike riots is suppressed. Does Mr. Fyvel really see in these the end of economic man?

There is the same weakness in each of his other points. He has to deal with the problem of whether the forces of privilege can be persuaded to abdicate and, if not, what line of action is to be taken. But he cannot really deal with these issues because he has no clue to the issues out of which they arise. He has no clue because, in an essential sense, he has no philosophy of history, no power, therefore, to predict the possibilities between which there is choice. So that his book ends with a plea that is little more than a *cri de cœur*. It would be a better world if there were liberty and equality. Of course it would. But Mr. Fyvel has painted so remorselessly the ugly world in which they were absent that his faith in an abstract reason which compels men to sacrifice is not really worthy of the remarkable account which precedes it.

HAROLD J. LASKI

The Penguin New Writing. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. 6*d.*

The material which John Lehmann used to gather into *New Writing* twice yearly was always too good to be limited to the few who were lucky enough to come across or to be able to afford that enterprising book-magazine. It is now made available to a much wider public. Moreover, the original material has gone through the process which cooks call "reducing," and the resulting mixture is strong and tasty. Each of the stories, sketches and reports in this first number stands out by itself. George Orwell, Christopher Isherwood, Leslie Halward, V. S. Pritchett, William Plomer, Ralph Fox—these are among the best of the writers of the younger generation and they are represented here by excellent examples of their work. But it was—or is, one should say, for *New Writing* is still to continue in its old form—a distinguishing feature of the magazine that it drew on the work of the younger writers of the Continent and of other continents. How valuable a contribution to the stream that was may be judged by reading, for example, the quite brilliant Chinese story "Hatred" in this Penguin *New Writing*. To be able to pick up for sixpence on any railway bookstall a selection from the best writing of the Thirties, and to find it not only excellent in quality, but eminently readable as well, is something of an achievement at this time. We should be grateful to the enterprise first of Mr. Lehmann and secondly to the proprietors of Penguin books, who between them have made this possible.

ALL ADVERTISEMENTS are accepted subject to the management's approval and right to amend or to refuse any advertisement whether paid for or not.

LECTURES AND MEETINGS

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, December 1st, at 11 a.m., PROFESSOR G. W. KEETON, M.A., LL.D.: "THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION." Admission free.

ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning Service only. December 1st, at 11.30. H. J. BLACKHAM: "'BLISS . . . IN THAT DAWN TO BE ALIVE.'"

CHRISTMAS
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CENTRE. Stratford-on-Avon. December 24th to January 2nd. 6s. 6d. per day. Open to young people of all nations. Information from Hon. Secretary: MRS. E. A. SHELDON WALTON, 16 Girton Road, Cambridge.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL

BELTANE SCHOOL now at Shaw Hill, Melksham, Wilts. Boys and girls from five to eighteen years. Economical running to meet wartime needs.

PINEWOOD, Crowborough, is now at The Fir Hill, Colan, St. Columb, Cornwall. Home school for boys and girls 3 to 13, where environment, diet, psychology and teaching methods still maintain health and happiness. ELIZABETH STRACHAN. St. Mawgan 279.

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL, LETCHWORTH. A thorough education for boys and girls to 19 years in an open-air atmosphere of ordered freedom. Principals: H. LYN HARRIS, M.A., LL.B.; MRS. LYN HARRIS, M.A.

HURTWOOD School, Peaslake, Guildford. Co-educ. from 3 years. A few children taken for holidays. Principal: JANET JEWSON, M.A., N.F.U. Tel.: Abinger 119.

CHILDREN'S FARM. Romansleigh, nr. S. Molton, N. Devon, will shortly have two vacancies. Children from 2–12. MRS. FALKNER, B.A.

SCOTLAND. Beverley Nursery School, Aberfoyle. A few vacancies for children 2 to 9 years in progressive atmosphere, special attention to diet and health, music and art. Particulars on application to the PRINCIPAL.

MALTMAN'S GREEN, Gerrard's Cross. *Head Mistress:* MISS CHAMBERS, M.A. Aim—to develop character and intellect, respect individuality and encourage initiative. Preparation for Universities, professions. 15 acres grounds.

BROOKLANDS, Crowborough 299. Pre-prep. and Nursery School. All-year-round home. Sound early education and training. Good health record. Excellent air-raid precautions.

DEVON. ST. GEORGE'S CHILDREN'S HOUSE, Belstone, Nr. Okehampton (evacuated from Harpenden), has vacancies for Boarders 2 to 9 years, for short or long periods. Particulars from MISS D. I. MATTHEWS.

MAPSTONE HOME SCHOOL, Lustleigh, Devon. Safe area, two houses, 500ft. above sea level. Entire care taken of children from 2 upwards. Term or holidays. Home-baking, farm and garden produce. Write Prospectus.

QUIET Area. Cornwall. Hollington Park School for Girls, St. Leonards-on-Sea, at The Bay Hotel, St. Ives. Recognised by Board of Education, ages 8 to 18, boarders only; 100% School Certificate successes. All games. Graduate staff. Parents accommodated. Open holidays.

BEDALES SCHOOL

NEAR PETERSFIELD, HANTS.

Headmaster: F. A. MEIER (M.A. Camb., B.Sc. London).

This progressive Public School for Boys and Girls from 11 to 19 is fortunately able to carry on its normal work in its own buildings. There is a separate Junior School for younger children from 5 to 11. Parents are thus able to send all their children to the same School, with obvious advantages in these days of difficult travel. (Reduced fees are granted for children of the same family.)

Bedales offers a modern education and a healthy country life in a safe area. The School Estate of 150 acres, including a Home Farm, is situated in beautiful country. There is a Library of 14,000 books, an Assembly Hall and Theatre, and exceptional facilities for both Science and Music. Scholarships are awarded annually, including some for Music and Arts.

Air-raid shelters, with sleeping bunks, are provided in case of need.

For prospectus, apply to the BURSAR.

KING ALFRED SCHOOL, progressive London day school since 1898, now takes boys and girls as day pupils and boarders on 180 acre estate, 40 miles north of London. Prospectus from Secretary, Flint Hall Farm, Royston, Herts.

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BUNCE COURT SCHOOL, now Trench Hall, WEM, Salop. Tel.: Wem 172. Principal: ANNA ESSINGER, M.A.

BRECHIN PLACE SCHOOL. Apply MRS. E. M. SPENCER, 11 Brechin Place, Gloucester Road, S.W.7.

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SCHOOLS—continued

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A DEGREE FOR YOU! Lond. Univ. degree candidates over 23 may take shorter Special Entrance instead of Matric. exam. Wolsey Hall will prepare you by post. Free loan of books; tuition continued *free* if you fail; low fees. 971 Successes at Sp. Ent.—Prospectus from C. D. Parker, M.A., LL.D., Dept. VH92, WOLSEY HALL, OXFORD. (Est. 1894.)

ARTHUR SEGAL'S PAINTING SCHOOL (for Professionals and non-Professionals, and also Psychological Therapy by special methods) *transferred from London to 183 Banbury Rd., Oxford.* Open every day (except Wednesday) including Sundays. Arthur Segal's method proves that *everyone can learn to paint.*

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APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

APPOINTMENT OF REGISTRAR

The Council invites applications for this appointment.

Commencing stipend £1,000 per annum. The Council wishes to make an appointment from April 1st next.

It is desirable that the Registrar should be a graduate of a British University.

Experience in University administration is desirable but not essential.

Applications (45 copies), supported by not more than three testimonials and three references, should be forwarded to the undersigned not later than January 1st, 1941.

Further particulars may be obtained from

Edmund Street, Birmingham. C. G. BURTON, Secretary.

November, 1940.

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited for the post of Youth Organiser in the Hitchin District, salary £250 per annum. The post will be, in the first place, for one year and candidates should possess experience in social work, particularly among young people. Applications, which should be accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials, should be sent to the undersigned before December 7th, 1940.

County Hall, Hertford. J. H. NEWSOM, Chief Education Officer.

APPOINTMENTS—continued

URGENT. Wanted for work with children, evacuation hostel West Country, keen social worker of play-centre experience. Apply Box 8226.

Y.W.C.A. COLLEGE, Selly Oak, Birmingham. Woman Tutor required. Qualifications for teaching in Social Science and Club leadership essential, psychology desirable. Apply immediately with testimonials to the General Secretary, Y.W.C.A. National Offices, Central Building, Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

ASSISTANCE required January in small co-educational home school, children 3–12. Teacher to help with older children; Housekeeper-Matron for 8 boarders. Suitable home for man and wife with own children. Progressive views; adequate salary. LOIS BROWN, The Lodge, Thornton-le-Dale, Yorks.

ACTIVE refined woman, fond of children, required as housekeeper or general help by married couple, two children. Friendly and considerate atmosphere. Attractive country, half-hourly bus Guildford. Comfortable house, fully electrified. Bearwood, Peaslake, Surrey.

IN a reception area, wanted shorthand-typist, British born. Knowledge of German essential, other languages an advantage. Trade Union reference required. State age, experience, and salary required. Box 8247.

RELEASED from internment for 10 years' anti-Nazi work, refugee, male (30), seeks post; 6 years in this country. Ph.D. (Leipzig), Diploma, School of Librarianship, University College, London. Teaching, research experience. Skilled translator. Specialist post-war history. German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian. Excellent references. Box 8228.

EDUCATED woman (Polish), thorough knowledge several langs. piano, gym. seeks post country with children all ages; willing help household if congenial home. Refs. Box 8235.

PROGRESSIVE woman seeks interesting work with board. Salary no object. Vicinity unbombed Midlands preferred. Light domestic duties not disdained. O'GRADY, 137 Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leics.

MIDDLE-AGED man, adaptable, organising ability, initiative, experienced social educational work, well read politics, art, psychology, etc., wants interesting work social, research or other. Box 8243.

DUTTON ONE-WEEK SHORTHAND. First lesson free Write Dept. N.S. 92–3 Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

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EDINBURGH. Manor Hotel, 50 Manor Place. Terms from 13s. 6d. per day. Reduction per week. Tel.: 228191.

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TO person with full-time creative or other work: bedrm., sitting-rm., food, etc., in cottage. Gas, elec. light, bungalow bath. £2 17s. 6d. MEO, Oxford Rd., Marlow, Bucks.

COUPLE (30's), Thorpe Bay, offer hospitality 2–3 days Xmas. Return food exps, to similar; cheerful, intelligent. Box 8220.

LAKELAND. Victoria Hotel. A.A. Beautiful Buttermere. 3½ *gns.* Safest place in England. Easy journey by night train. Tel.: Buttermere 2. Every convenience.

GROUND-FLOOR divan room, 17s. 6d. (double). Or return light services. Kitchen. Pri. 0878. or S.S., 169 Finchley Road, N.W.3.

DAME KATHARINE FURSE would share her cottage with two people with independent interests and ideas. Remote village; modernised house, comfort but simple living. References needed. Ebbesbourne Wake, Salisbury (11 miles).

ACCOMMODATION in very attractive, comfortable house away from sirens. 2½ *gns.* p.w. inclusive. MRS. WOOLLASTON, Pedlam Brook, West Peckham, Hadlow, nr. Tonbridge, Kent.

MOTHER and two children require accommodation 50–70 miles from London. One or two furnished rooms or flat. Would consider sharing with family. Prefer full board. Not near aerodrome. HORNSBY, 303 Nelson House Dolphin Square, London, S.W.1.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Rates and all information on page 547

Week-end Competitions

A combination of circumstances which our readers will easily understand has forced us during the last few weeks to rely upon Londoners with a Monday off to set our competitions. We are now proposing to make the experiment of postponing the competition reports for a further week, thus giving setters out of London time to correct and return the entries. In order to avoid a "meatless" week, however, we are setting two competitions to-day. The solutions to both *are to be sent in by Monday, December 9th, and the report on the first will appear as usual a fortnight later, the report on the second (and on all subsequent competitions) three weeks later.*

No. 564

Set by Bernard Varley

We offer the usual prizes for the best new coined word in a convincing setting. Thus, one might invent a verb "to friligate," and the phrase in which it would pass might be "the friligated leaves of the juniper."

No. 565

Set by Joan Mair

The usual prizes are offered for the best extracts from a conversation in a public air-raid shelter between one character from either Fielding, Jane Austen, Trollope or Peacock, and another character from either Charles Morgan, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf or James Hadley Chase. Entries should be limited to 250 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, December 9th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 562

Set by Thomas Smallbones

A personal column advertisement the other week mentioned "a high brow with low brow virtues." High brow, low brow, virtue, vice. . . . The usual prizes are offered for a fantasia on this theme. A 300-word limit is the only restriction.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

The net was purposely cast very wide and a very pretty selection of fish it caught. Being finely meshed it brought up a good sediment of dirt, too, but less funny than our competitors usually achieve along these lines. I was a little surprised to find how universally the popular idea of high brows was accepted. No one stood up for them; most accepted them at their plain face value which Vivien Bulkley expressed plainly and neatly:

The high brows are a funny crowd—
Their clothes are very odd;
They write for the NEW STATESMAN
And they don't believe in God.

Their food is chiefly roughage,
They sometimes sprout a beard,
Their views on sex-relationships
Are certainly most weird. . . .

The low brow, on the other hand
Is solid to the core,
Reads the *Express* and *Mirror*
And seldom asks for more.

He hates all bloody foreigners:
His motto's "Do or Die."
Give me the jolly low brow
And you can keep the high!

F. W. H. sent in the best of the prose fantasias; a carefully worked up piece which is spoilt by the selection space enforces:

There is the rhythmic incantation of a Gertrude Stein, the sheep's head lullaby of comatose maggots; what indeed is mind, no matter, and matter, never mind. Virtue this side of the counterpane, vice on that.

Vice, perchance vice versa as the great king said when the mountains vanished in the psychological union of elective affinities. Paper and pens and ink, together with the gardener's daughter, and the cat that is not a dog—all these are symbols of the inkocracy which it is believed must rule the world. O curas hominum, O quantum est in rebus. INANE: O, O, the final equation and the final symbol!

Stuart Smith, Lucie Milnes and Alice Herbert all tried the fable, a form which I would like to have rewarded, but none of them seemed quite to reach the standard.

Nancy Gunter deserves quotation for the first line, if nothing else:

Yes, we have no bananas, high brows or low brows here

Charles Furbank was one of the runners up:

Dear Sir,—

I was reeding yore perryoddycal not without proffit in a Publick (Librey not wat you mite expeckt) wen I came akros yore compo! Well sir, I dont ehxajerate wen I say Ive got the hiest brough in Haddenham, and thets the trooth. Though on the hole Ile alow their low there. Some neva having herd on Nat Gould let olone Weeda!

You can gather how hi I am wen I say thet I rede Sex Romer in the orryginal and Walpool with onley a typests dickshenery. I skorn the outpawrings of the Yelho Press; for mi tung is not for lihing framed or repeting ither, sir. Hougheva I coud walloo in the sumtewus ritings of Barrownees Awksey for ever. Even the hallooed pages of Joano Lunduns perryoodicale ah not unnone to me. I sore there that there are hi broughs away in Afreeca. Thets phial eeting pashern flowrs and yogfrert wen they ort to be fiting. I drawr the lyon there and remane yore corry despondent,

Artymas Ward.

N. Lewis was the second:

Cultured *Accommodatus* is my theme,
Who works in *Bloomsbury*, but lives in *Cheam;*
Gardens, quotes *Marvell;* groans, and pays his rent;
Invests his all in War Loan, 3 per cent.;
Has the NEW STATESMAN posted to his house,
And orders *Illustrated* for his spouse.
Sunday, does *Torquemada;* makes his call
To Church—the Ethical—at *Conway Hall.*
Has nothing hoarded to eschew the tax—
Save records of *Scarlatti* and of *Bax;*
Reads Russian verse—but would not have it known
At ten, retires to bed—and that, his own—
Weep for *Accommodatus!* whose sere soul
Offends no neighbour, but attains no goal.
What lesson from the ancients has he learnt
Who sees the golden flames, and stays unburnt?

Finally, the prizes. The first to Pontifex (address please), for his charming simplicity. The second to Sir Robert Witt for his antithetical urbanity.

FIRST PRIZE

O say, what is this thing called vice
Which other folk enjoy?
O is it really rather nice?
Please tell a high brow boy.

I've read some Juvenal and Wilde,
And D. H. Lawrence through.
Some parts I could not understand—
O were they highbrows too?

I'm good; I'm clean; I do not cheat;
I always pay my fare;
I very seldom overeat;
I do not mind fresh air.

But Rousseau led a dreadful life,
I found out, after search
Shelley, they tell me, left his wife
And did not go to church.

Byron had several wives at once;
He really was not nice.
And Burns was full of sex and things
Though he wrote of flowers and mice.

O if I acted like these men
I should be judged severely!
If there's no virtue in the pen
Am I a highbrow really? PONTIFEX

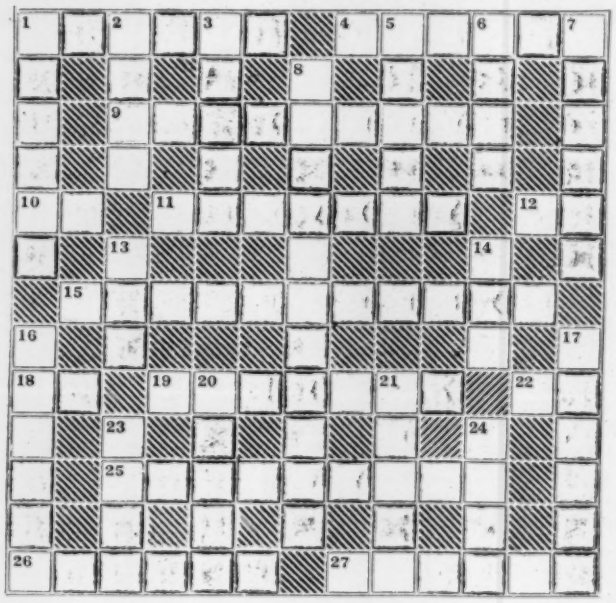
SECOND PRIZE

High brow, low brow; virtue, vice;
Duty, beauty; Bible, dice;
Hell and Heaven; youth and age;
Faith unfaithful; simple, sage;
Kind word, "Crossword"; curse and bless;
Splendid failure; sad success;
Freedom, fetters; liberty, bars;
Calvin, Capua; mud and stars;
Labour, lotus; toil and rest;
Doldrum, tempest; trough and crest;
Conservative, Communist; red and blue;
Clair-obscur, chaudfroid, falsely true.

SIR ROBERT WITT

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 9

Set by V. S.



The last week's winner is:

I. Tessel, 109 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants.

ACROSS

1. One hon. member takes beer to make him spit. (6)
4. Blow the devil and one of his works. (6)
9. Makes magic casements? (9)
10. See 22.
11. Chain letter-writer has one over the eight. (7)
12. A kind of square circle. (2)
15. Remember me in bed, perhaps. (6 hyphen 2 hyphen 3)
18 and 12. The stoic should be given the "cat" naked. (4)
19. —And Country Digging for Victory. (7)
22 and 10. Call the bloody doctor. (4)
25. Not a pretty ditty? (5 hyphen 4)
26. Among herbs, an unmentionable smell is ahead of the fashion. (6)
27. Asked just where to lay an egg. (6)

DOWN

1. It's a fairy. (6)
2. Look like Tom. (4)
3. The English post the French a machine. (5)
5. Mother has little confidence in wine. (5)
6. Nothing under a guinea. (4)
7. T. (6)
8. Careful to put father in the betting. (11)
13 and 14. Penny under a pound and no return for your capital. (6)
14. Assume a title. (3)
16. Bob, Charles and Jack write up the public house accounts. (6)
17. 55 indeed. (6)
20. Simian failure to finish the fruit. (5)
21. The empty nose is above the drop. (5)
23. Boxwood? (4)
24. Eager as a giant. (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

S	E	A	L	S	K	I	N	■	S	E	A	M
O	■	■	I	■	M	■	P	■	■	■	I	■
U	■	S	T	E	P	S	O	N	■	■	S	■
R	C	■	E	■	O	■	E	■	C	■	S	■
■	L	A	D	■	A	R	P	■	C	A	R	T
M	■	P	■	S	■	T	■	S	■	B	■	A
A	S	S	E	T	S	■	T	H	E	I	S	T
N	■	I	■	Y	■	G	■	Y	■	N	■	E
D	O	Z	E	■	G	I	N	■	E	E	R	■
R	■	E	■	A	■	W	■	A	■	T	■	R
A	■	■	E	Y	E	B	A	L	L	■	■	E
K	■	■	■	E	■	O	■	T	■	■	■	N
E	M	M	A	■	A	B	S	O	N	A	N	T

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

DOLLAR FINANCE AND THE NEXT REQUISITIONING—IMPERIAL TOBACCO—TUBE INVESTMENTS.

INVESTORS who have a few dollar securities left in their portfolios after the severe Treasury requisitionings will have shivered at Lord Lothian's remarks on the state of British finance in the U.S.A. Perhaps our Ambassador was less anxious to make our flesh creep than to prepare American opinion for a revision of the financial provisions of the Johnson and Neutrality Acts, which now operate against the fulfilling of the Washington policy of full aid to Britain short of war. I cannot believe that our gold and dollar resources have been "virtually used up." We began the war with gold assets of $2,000 millions, dollar balances of $600 millions, and readily negotiable securities of $700 millions (since revalued by Washington at $1,170 millions). Canadian and Dutch holdings of negotiable securities added another $2,500 millions, making a grand total of $6,270 millions. Further, our direct long-term investments in the U.S. were valued at $1,000 mn. And we produce in the Empire every year gold to the value of $750 millions. It is difficult to guess, but it seems unlikely that we can be spending more than $2,000 millions a year in America, of which about 10 per cent. might be paid for by exports. In the first year of the war we purchased less than $800 millions of American goods, but, of course, Canadian purchases are mounting as rapidly as our own. If Canadian and Dutch negotiable securities are excluded I can understand Lord Lothian's warning. If the authorities here are busy preparing their next and possibly last list of dollar requisitionings, may I suggest to the Treasury that they should initiate negotiations for the sale of some of our long-term South American investments to American capitalists? Who wants to own railways to-day in Argentina, Brazil, Chile or Peru? If President Roosevelt would like to see the Americas knit more closely together in the economic sphere, let him buy some of our long-term holdings in those countries.

* * *

It is curious that the Imperial Tobacco ordinary stock, which has long been a leader of the industrial market, should return so high a yield as 6¾ per cent. gross at 5¼ on the basis of a dividend of 20 per cent. free of tax. (This is equivalent to last year's dividend of 23 per cent. net, allowing for the increase in income tax). It suggests that the market is discounting a further cut in the bonus which will be declared with the final dividend in January. There have been rumours that the company's stocks of Virginia leaf have been requisitioned by the Government, and allocated to the trade on a quota basis, and that the company has been compelled to take very large stocks of Turkish leaf which the Government has purchased from Turkey. As usual, the facts are very different from the rumour. The truth is that the tobacco trade has agreed to supply companies which have had stocks destroyed in air raids with supplies from the surplus stocks of the more fortunate companies and to take over from the Government stocks of Turkish leaf up to 5 per cent. of their current turnover. These natural and normal arrangements will not bear hardly upon Imperial Tobacco, which has large stocks as well as enormous cash resources. Incidentally, the existence of Turkish stocks is a valuable safeguard against a possible shortage of Virginia leaf, and I would say that anything which improves the quality and smell of British smoking is to be welcomed. The trouble in the tobacco trade arises out of the transport delays and the difficulties of distribution. In spite of the increasing purchasing power of the nation, tobacco consumption is likely to fall off because smokers are often unable to make their normal purchases of cigarettes. I am, therefore, quite prepared to see a cut in the Imperial Tobacco bonus, but I am not prepared to say that the shares have not already discounted this possibility.

* * *

Tube Investments now claims to be a stable dividend equity. The net revenue for the year to October 31st is slightly down, but the dividend of 23¾ per cent. was maintained with a slight increase in the carry-forward, earnings being a little under 30 per cent. The carry-forward represents rather less than 5 per cent. on the ordinary capital, so that some investors may feel that the margin between earnings and dividends is not very large or that the ordinary dividend is not so stable as it appears. But it must be borne in mind first, that Tube Investments is a holding company and that the directors are bound to be very conservative before striking the profits of their subsidiary companies; secondly, that the company is not dependent upon one type of business, but that its subsidiary companies are engaged in a wide range of the engineering trades; thirdly, that the company has thirty factories fully engaged and geographically well spread so that its vulnerability to bombing is less than the average. Finally, the company maintains a strong cash position and has deposited over a million pounds with the Government free of interest to meet coming income tax. The shares at 85*s.* 6*d.* return a yield of £5 11*s.* per cent., and must be regarded as fairly valued—neither dear nor cheap. Everyone will regret that Mr. Arthur Chamberlain is omitting his stimulating annual speech this year, but he rightly remarks that deeds, not words, are what the hour demands.

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